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AN INQUIRY INTO THE PRINCIPLES OF ECCLESIASTICAL PATRONAGE AND PRESENTATION,

IN WHICH ARE CONTAINED,

VIEWS OF THE INFLUENCE OF THIS SPECIES OF PATRONAGE,

ON THE

MANNERS AND CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE.

DIVIDED INTO THREE PARTS.

——ὁ δὲ ᾧ τῇ πατρίδι ὑπὲρ τοῦ, μὴ ταύτην ἰσοίδειν δυλεύσειν, ἀσοθνήσκειν εθελήσει. Demosth.

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MDCCLXXXIII.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THERE are two chief points of view, in which the ſubject of the following inquiry, naturally, preſents itſelf. In the firſt place, Patronage may be conſidered as relative to principles of law, religion, and the particular conſtitution of our church. In the ſecond place, it may be conſidered, in a more extended view, as influencing the public utility at large, without relation to any particular ſyſtem. But before entering upon the diſcuſſion of theſe particulars, it occurred, that it would be proper, by way of introduction, to give a general view of the nature of the ſubject.

THE firſt part of the inquiry, therefore, contains a general view of the ſubject. The ſecond, treats, of the right of Patronage and Preſentation, upon principles of law, religion, and the conſtitution of the Preſbyterian church The third concerns the effect of Patronage and Preſentation, with regard to the different ſources of public utility.

WE

We have heard, that even among thoſe who are enemies to Patronage, a difference of opinion prevails with reſpect to the mode of election, which ought to take place, in the event of a repeal of the patronage laws. In that ſituation, to endeavour to unite their ſentiments, appeared to be an object of importance. We had, therefore, conceived a plan of election, which ſhould be highly popular, and ſhould, at the ſame time, beſtow upon landholders, that ſhare of influence in the election of miniſters, to which they are intitled by their rank, their education, and intereſt in the country; which ſhould produce, among the people, that ſenſe of liberty, ſo eſſential to the exiſtence of a free government, and ſhould be exempted, as far as poſſible, from thoſe popular diſturbances, that are apprehended to be the effects of popular elections. But in reviewing this plan, we have found the ſubject attended with conſiderable difficulty, and have not, therefore, been hitherto able to reduce it to ſuch a form, as we could venture to offer to the public. If, however, the preſent inquiry, ſhall meet with the public approbation, we ſhall embrace a future opportunity of ſubmitting the plan we have formed, like that inquiry, with the utmoſt deference, to the examination of the public.

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In the note on page 82, it is ſaid, that the keeping up the qualifications of electors of members of parliament, at L. 200 Scots of valued rent, would ſtill exclude many proprietors of L. 100, L. 200, L. 300, and even L. 500 of real rent. Of the truth of this aſſertion, however, to its full extent, though advanced upon probable grounds, we are not abſolutely certain. If, upon more accurate inquiry, we ſhall diſcover that errors in point of fact, have been committed, either in that inſtance, or in any other, theſe errors ſhall be readily corrected. To reaſon, in any caſe, from a miſrepreſentation of facts, is inconſiſtent with the reſpect which is due to the public, and is in itſelf equally culpable and contemptible.

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AN

AN INQUIRY INTO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE RIGHT OF ECCLESIASTICAL PATRONAGE AND PRESENTATION.

PART I.

General View of the Subject.

SECTION I.

Definition or Explanation of the terms of Preſentation and Popular Elections.

IT is neceſſary that the terms of the queſtion ſhould be clearly explained and underſtood; otherwiſe, all reaſoning upon it, muſt be unſatisfactory and inconcluſive.

WHAT is meant by a popular election, is not, we apprehend, a matter of doubtful interpretation. The words, themſelves, are fully expreſſive of the idea annexed to them, that the right and power of election ſhould be veſted in the people, at large; by which is meant, at leaſt, the heritors, elders, and heads of families, in every pariſh.

THE term preſentation, which is the exerciſe of the right of patronage, means not a power, merely, of propoſing a candidate, but of compelling the church and the people, to receive the preſentee, into the charge, and to ſubmit, implicitly, to his teaching and miniſtry*. This is the definition, of the right of preſentation, which patrons have adopted, and which the eccleſiaſtical courts have lately fixed, by their judicial determinations. According to this definition of the right of preſentation, we propoſe to maintain, that it includes a power, the exerciſe of which, ought, for many reaſons, to be entirely reſtrained.

* The accuracy of this definition is not diſproved by ſaying that although the patron may retain the ſtipend, if his preſentee is not ſettled, yet the church may ſettle whom ſhe pleaſes, in the ſpiritual charge. For, it is evident, that while the church and the people are denied the means of giving effect to their ſettlement, by beſtowing the living upon the perſon ſettled, they are, in ſound ſenſe, deprived of the power of ſettlement, or, in other words, are compellable to ſubmit to the patron's nomination. The ſubtilty, therefore, which is here mentioned, has been, entirely, diſregarded, in forming the definition of the right of preſentation.

SECT.

SECT. II.

State of the Queſtion.

THE ſubject of the preſent inquiry has been often agitated under the following views: 1. Whether the right of preſentation of miniſters to church livings, exerciſed by patrons, is ſupported by the ſtatute law of the country?

2. SUPPOSING this right to be founded in law, whether the unlimited and rigorous exerciſe of it, which has been adopted by patrons, and authoriſed by ſome recent deciſions of the ſupreme eccleſiaſtical court, receives any countenance from the very law upon which it is founded?

3. IF the interpretation given by the higheſt eccleſiaſtical court, to the law eſtabliſhing patronage, is juſt, ought that law to be repealed by parliament, as being adverſe to the conſtitution of the church of Scotland, to the religious liberties of the people, and to the public utility?

THESE queſtions have been often debated with much ingenuity and learning, mixed with a conſiderable ſhare of animoſity, both in private companies, and public aſſemblies. In diſcuſſions which affect

the perſonal influence, and other private intereſts of the parties and their connections, no leſs than the public good, it is not natural to expect, even among men of poliſhed manners, that their deliberations ſhould be always diſpaſſionate, or that the voice of reaſon and juſtice, ſhould, on every occaſion, be liſtened to, with an unremitting attention.

THE author of the propoſed inquiry has no private intereſt, of any kind, in the diſpute. He is no patron, nor connected with any patron; and as little is he connected with the gentlemen who at preſent take the lead in the oppoſition to the Patronage Laws. If, in this ſituation, unbiaſſed as he is by private motives, he ſhould, at any time, tranſgreſs that degree of moderation which he ſhould wiſh to preſerve, in every diſcuſſion, he flatters himſelf, that ample allowance will be made on account of a ſubject which, as it involves queſtions concerning very important civil and religious rights, muſt, on ſome occaſions, naturally, excite a degree of warmth.

BEFORE entering upon the propoſed inquiry into the principles of the right of preſentation, it may not be improper to exhibit a ſhort view of the arguments which have been uſed by both parties, and then, to ſhew the importance of the queſtion, both in a political and religious light.

SECT.

SECT. III.

Summary of the Arguments which have been uſed on both ſides of the Queſtion.

FOR patrons, it has been maintained, 1. That however much, from principles of humanity, they diſapproved of a rigorous uſe of the right of patronage, the right itſelf was yet firmly and clearly aſcertained to them by the ſtatute of the 10th of Queen Ann, which was one of the ſtanding laws of the kingdom. Upon this ſtatute, patrons and their friends, have, chiefly, reſted their claim, without inquiring much into the laws and conſtitution of the church, as they formerly ſtood, or entering into thoſe various revolutions which the right of patronage had undergone from the reformation till the enactment of the ſtatute of Queen Ann.

2. IT has been further added, with much apparent force, in behalf of patrons, that the public intereſt is concerned, in preſerving the right of preſentation where the ſtatute of Queen Ann has placed it, becauſe, the moſt pernicious conſequences to literature and morals would follow, if, the right of electing the miniſters of the Goſpel were repoſed in the hands of illiterate men.

3. IT was ſaid, that the clergy were paid by the patrons, at leaſt, by them and the heritors; and, as it ſeemed highly reaſonable, that thoſe who paid, ſhould have the election of miniſters, it followed, that whatever claim the heritors might have to a ſhare in the election, the reſt of the people could have no pretenſions.

4. SOME other arguments were urged, in ſupport of the right of preſentation, but they were deduced from the principles of patronage, as it was underſtood, under the Popiſh form of church policy: They were founded upon the maxim, *Patronum faciunt dos, ædificatio, fundus;* of which ſome notice ſhall afterwards be taken.

UPON the other ſide of the queſtion, the argument has been ſtated in different views.

1. IT has been maintained, in direct terms, that the right of preſentation was not ſupported by the civil ſtatutory law of Scotland, far leſs, by the laws of the church. To prove this propoſition, the friends of popular elections have appealed to the two ſtatutes of 1690, by which patronage was aboliſhed, and Preſbyterian church government eſtabliſhed; ſo that the ſyſtem of eccleſiaſtical policy which was received and ratified by theſe ſtatutes, excluded entirely the right of patronage. Both ſtatutes, which

formed

formed parts of one ſyſtem of eccleſiaſtical policy, ſtood in force at the period of the union between the two kingdoms. They have again appealed to the articles of the treaty of union, by which the Preſbyterian form of church government, as then eſtabliſhed by law, was declared to be unalterable; and from theſe premiſes, they have inferred, that the ſtatute of Queen Ann is void, as being made in direct oppoſition to a fundamental national treaty, which, without diſſolving the union thereby eſtabliſhed, could not have been violated.

2. THE friends of popular elections have affirmed, that, from the reformation downwards, a few late years excepted, the church of Scotland, in the nature of her inſtitution ſo favourable to good morals and public happineſs, hath uniformly declared her abhorrence of the law of patronage. They contended, that, in every age, the church had pronounced it to be an inſufferable grievance, as being an open violation of the natural rights of the people, inconſiſtent with their edification, and the uſefulneſs of the miniſters of the church of God, and as tending, in its conſequences, to the utter deſtruction of the venerable fabric of that church which ſtands, and has ſtood, for ages, upon the beautiful and majeſtic pillars, of ſimplicity and liberty.

3. THE people and the church have *united* the voice of complaint, in declaring and teſtifying to the world,

world, that however much, patrons and their adherents have, in theory, admitted the propriety of a moderate uſe of their rights, yet the experience of ſeventy years has diſproved the ſincerity of their profeſſions, and has afforded complete and inconteſtable evidence, of the rigour and violence with which they have exerciſed theſe pretended rights, in the mournful ſcenes of deſolated churches, and in the eſtabliſhment of ſeceſſions, often as numerous and reſpectable, as were thoſe churches which the unhallowed hand of preſentation had deſolated.

4. THE enemies of patronage have denied that morals and literature could ſuffer the ſmalleſt prejudice from the right of election being veſted in the people; on the contrary, their morals would, naturally, be amended by the edification of men of their own choice, whom they would love, and to whom, therefore, they would liſten, with attention, equally, in private exhortation and in public diſcourſe. With regard to literature, it would ſeem to ſtand altogether independent both of preſentation and popular election, and could not be influenced by the deciſion of the queſtion, one way or another. It was not, they ſaid, eaſy to conceive, that the intereſt of literature was any more connected with the laws of patronage, than it was with the laws of navigation, or any other inſtitution of the country.

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As to the argument deduced from the payment of ſtipend, by patrons and heritors, it was pronounced to have little force. Their paying the clergy could never give them a right to interfere with, or direct the ſpiritual intereſts of the people; and it will afterwards be ſhewn, that there was even a miſtake, in point of fact, in the averment, upon which, that argument was founded.

SECT. IV.

The importance of the Queſtion, and the neceſſity of coming to a Determination upon it.

THIS is a ſummary, perhaps, a very imperfect one, of the arguments which have been uſed on both ſides of the queſtion reſpecting the right of preſentation, the principles of which, we propoſe to trace and explain, in the preſent inquiry. To this inquiry, we have been led, not from any deſire of delivering an opinion, upon the controverſy, as it ſtands, in the repreſentation of the argument which has been exhibited, but from obſerving, that the period is now arrived, when it has become abſolutely neceſſary, for the people of Scotland, to form a deciſive opinion upon the ſubject.

FOR ſeveral years paſt, the deciſions of the ſupreme eccleſiaſtical court have confirmed the moſt rigorous,

and

and unlimited exercise of the right of presentation. They have given full effect to a presentation supported by *one non-residing heritor*, in opposition to the voice of all the other heritors, and the rest of the people, without exception. This decision brings the question to an ultimate point. One of two things must, necessarily, happen; either the law of presentation, as it is now explained, by the supreme ecclesiastical court, must be abolished by parliament, or it must be, patiently, submitted to, in the utmost extent of its severity.

THIS question, which is considered, by some, to be of little importance, appears, however, to involve an object of no less magnitude than this, whether every idea and every impression of liberty, shall be extinguished, among the great mass, of the people of Scotland?

IF the common people of this country possess any ideas of civil liberty, they are, without question, extremely faint, and only result from those sparks of spiritual or ecclesiastical freedom which were kindled by the reformation, and which, though they have, no doubt, been weakened, have not been, entirely, extinguished, by the exercise of the right of presentation, which, from that time, had never obtained, in Scotland, a firm and unquestionable footing. Had it been the misfortune of the people to have been reconciled

to the unlimited exerciſe of this right, and to have given it an implicit ſubmiſſion, they would have been at this day, as deſtitute of any ideas of eccleſiaſtical, as they are, of thoſe, of civil liberty. This would certainly have been the natural conſequence of the want of enjoying any ſhare of eccleſiaſtical freedom or power; and a ſimilar cauſe has produced, among the great body of the common people of this country, almoſt, a total want of ideas, with reſpect to the nature and advantages of civil liberty.

THE conſtitution of Scotland, in common with that of England, poſſeſſes many valuable advantages, ſuperior, we believe, to any which the conſtitutions of the other nations of Europe can boaſt of. In ſurveying, however, the beauties of the work, we are ſtruck with ſome deformities which are conſpicuous, and which ſeem to diſgrace the reſt of the fabric.

ALTHOUGH it is the profeſſed principle of the conſtitution to repoſe the legiſlative power where there is property, yet the form, in oppoſition to the ſpirit, of the conſtitution, is ſuch, that about three-fourths of the ſubſtantial landholders of the country are excluded from the enjoyment of any ſhare of that important and exalted right. Hence it has happened, that thoſe landholders who are thus deprived of the exerciſe of legiſlative powers, though they are numerous

rous, wealthy, and reſpectable, have no adequate ideas of their own importance; have but faint and imperfect ideas of the nature and advantages of civil liberty; and can take no active concern in the direction or management of public affairs. Theſe are, by conſequence, left to be conducted, entirely, by the factions of individuals, who, by being Crown vaſſals, and poſſeſſing extenſive ſuperiorities, engroſs the whole legiſlative power of the ſtate, ſo far as the democracy, the moſt important branch of the legiſlature, is concerned. The pernicious conſequences of this defect, in the conſtitution, are too obvious to require illuſtration. We cannot venture to affirm, that the preſent calamities of the country have ariſen entirely from this ſource; but it is no improbable conjecture, that they have, in ſome meaſure, proceeded from it, and from ſimilar defects in the conſtitution of our neighbouring country; for it is the very nature, at leaſt, of the preſent form of our conſtitution, that in parliamentary elections, and upon the greateſt national queſtions, the ſenſe of the people can be but imperfectly and partially collected.

BUT, in mentioning this defect in the conſtitution, it was by no means our intention, at preſent, to enter into any diſcuſſion reſpecting the imperfections in the parliamentary repreſentations of the people. Our only deſign was to trace the connection between the poſſeſſing a reaſonable ſhare of juſt and conſti-

tutional

tutional power, and the having juſt and adequate ideas of civil liberty. Theſe are, indeed, circumſtances which appear to be naturally and inſeparably connected; and, unleſs in very peculiar ſituations, the one cannot exiſt without the other.

IT will be allowed, that, from a want of the exerciſe of legiſlative powers, many of the landholders, however reſpectable, have but very faint and imperfect ideas of the value or extent of civil freedom. This doctrine is more peculiarly applicable to the common people of Scotland; which muſt be ſufficiently obvious to every one who has ever glanced at the ſtructure of the civil conſtitution of the country.

IT is true, that by the form of this conſtitution, few landholders, comparatively ſpeaking, poſſeſs legiſlative powers; all landholders, however, exerciſe certain rights naturally connected with their properties; which give them ſome ideas of the nature and value of civil liberty, and of their own importance. But the whole body of the common people of Scotland, are totally excluded from enjoying the ſmalleſt ſhare of power, with regard to the direction or adminiſtration of public affairs. In relation to theſe, they have no more power than the oxen they drive, or the horſes they ride; and, of courſe, can have no juſt ideas or impreſſions reſpecting the nature or advan-

tages of civil liberty. This part of the conſtitution we mean not, greatly, to cenſure; for, although we are convinced that it has produced, and will produce, pernicious conſequences, yet we know not how the defect could be remedied, with propriety and ſecurity, conſidering the incapacity, for public affairs, that will, naturally, accompany the human character, when placed in certain ſituations.

FROM the circumſtances which have been mentioned, we mean only to conclude, that the whole common people of Scotland, are, from the neceſſary operation of political cauſes, in ſuch a condition, that they can have no juſt conceptions or impreſſions of the nature or extent of political liberty, except alone, what ideas of freedom may ariſe from the enjoyment of their ſpiritual or eccleſiaſtical rights. Of this propoſition, the evidence depends not on ſpeculation alone; for, upon attending to the occurrences which paſs daily before us, it will be found, that very recent experience affords a ſtill clearer demonſtration of the truth of the aſſertion; and it would be eaſy, were it neceſſary, to appeal to facts of a more ancient date, or more certain deciſion.

WITHIN theſe two years, when a bill was brought into parliament, to repeal the penal laws againſt perſons profeſſing the Roman Catholic religion, the people took the alarm. They were afraid that their religious

religious liberties might, once more, be ſacrificed upon the altars of Popiſh ſuperſtition. Hence, a violent and univerſal oppoſition of the people aroſe, with what propriety or liberality of ſentiment, we pretend not to judge. The ſpirit of religious liberty, introduced by the reformation, which had never been completely extinguiſhed, recovered, as it were, for a moment, its original ſtrength, and took a faſt hold of the minds of the people, ſo that there was no degree of danger which they were not prepared to encounter, in defence of their religious rights, and of that purity and ſimplicity of worſhip, which had ever diſtinguiſhed the Preſbyterian perſuaſion.

BUT view the conduct of the ſame people, when an attack upon their civil liberties and properties is threatened, and threatened, too, in ſuch a manner as might have awakened the feelings of political liberty, had they not been utterly extinguiſhed. The Dutch are reported to be on the coaſt, and prepared to invade the country. The alarm is ſpread. Warning is given by adminiſtration to every ſea-port town; and the whole country is directed to arm, for its own defence! Upon this emergency, was there any number of the common people of Scotland, who took arms into their hands, from the one end of the country to the other? If there were any, they were ſo few and inconſiderable, that they merit no atten-

tion, and we know not a ſingle man who took arms upon the occaſion.

THE manifeſt difference, in the conduct of the people, upon theſe two events, is ſurpriſing only to thoſe who look not at the effects of natural cauſes, upon the minds of the people. All men are, by the fundamental principles of Chriſtianity, upon an equal footing, with reſpect to the nature and extent of their intereſt, in the Chriſtian ſyſtem. The people, beſides, had, ſince the reformation, which ſeparated Chriſtianity from ſuperſtition, enjoyed a conſiderable ſhare of religious, or ſpiritual, freedom. From the influence of theſe two cauſes, they were impreſſed with a deep concern for every thing relating to religion: and therefore, when they dreaded an invaſion of their ſpiritual rights, they naturally felt with violence, and their actions were, in every reſpect, ſuitable to the nature of their feelings. But when an invaſion only of the civil conſtitution of the country was threatened, as the people did not enjoy any ſhare of the civil adminiſtration, having little or nothing beſides a mere exiſtence in the ſtate, they could not feel an equally deep intereſt in its preſervation; and, of courſe, could not act, with the ſame ſpirit and vehemence, on the occaſion. For it is plain, that where men do not enjoy rights, they cannot feel their importance, nor can their minds be elevated and prepared, for manly exertions, in their defence.

SUCH

SUCH is the ſituation of the common people of Scotland, with regard to their ſenſe of civil liberty; and it appears to be ſufficiently plain, however much to be regreted, that they have no juſt conception of liberty, of any kind, excepting what is derived from the ſource of eccleſiaſtical freedom.

THE queſtion, then, is, whether, by an implicit ſubmiſſion to the law of preſentations, the eccleſiaſtical or ſpiritual liberty of the people is, likewiſe, to be extinguiſhed; ſo that, henceforth, there ſhall not remain, in Scotland, a trace, or impreſſion, of either civil or religious freedom, among the great body of the people?

WERE ſuch a plan of conduct to be adopted, the conſequences would be more alarming, perhaps, in the end, more fatal, than either a French, or a Dutch invaſion. In the hands of an intereſted individual, poſſeſſed of power, what uſe might not be made of a great body of people having no juſt ſenſe of either civil or religious liberty! We chuſe not to paint every pernicious conſequence which this proſpect opens to the mind of every man who reflects upon the condition of his country.

ONE of the moſt eminent lawyers to whom Scotland has given birth, laboured, we believe, with ſincerity, to prove the divine right of a certain family,

to the throne of theſe kingdoms. He has left us, upon that ſingular ſubject, a large treatiſe fraught with ingenuity and extenſive learning; and ſuch was the zeal and boldneſs of that learned devotee of deſpotiſm, that, in ſupport of an impious tenet, he had dared, repeatedly, to appeal for evidence, to the authority of the ſacred Scriptures.

THE character of this man was, in other reſpects, conſiderable and reſpectable. It is not yet much above half a century, ſince he went to his grave, under a firm conviction of the divine right of the houſe of Stewart, and of every branch of that illuſtrious houſe. If men of his character and ſentiments were ever again to ariſe in this country, it is not difficult to conceive, what uſe might be made of the people of Scotland, in the ſituation to which they would be reduced, after a period of implicit ſubmiſſion to the law of patronage.

IF a man, whoſe love of his country extends beyond the preſent day, could, in ſuch a caſe, entertain any hope of ſecurity againſt a univerſal domeſtic deſpotiſm, both civil and religious, it could only ariſe from contemplating the dejected condition of the bulk of the people, which would render them even unfit inſtruments in the hands of wicked or ambitious men, to enſlave thoſe few, who, from their ſituations, ſhould preſerve any ſenſe of liberty, and any

any ſpirit to defend it; a wretched ſource of conſolation, which conſiſts in the depreſſion and depravity of our countrymen! But here, again, a new and alarming proſpect preſents itſelf, which muſt excite painful emotions in the mind of every man who loves the conſtitution, and reſpects the happineſs of his country; a people, once renowned in arms, now expoſed to inſults, and to invaſions of their religious and civil liberties, from foreign enemies, without being able to feel the influence of thoſe paſſions, or that elevation of mind, which ſhould dictate the moſt effectual means of defence and preſervation *!

In taking theſe extenſive views of the ſubject, the reader muſt riſe ſuperior to the little intereſts of patrons and preſentees, and, in ſpite of all the efforts of moderation, will be apt to look, with ſome degree of contempt, on the zeal and activity of thoſe men, who contend for ſuch inſignificant objects, however much he may love their perſons, and admire their abilities.

* One of the evils which we have here deſcribed and lamented, will be, in ſome meaſure, corrected, by the eſtabliſhment of the propoſed militia, for Scotland. The uſe of handling arms will inſpire a degree of boldneſs, and an inclination for war: A courſe of ſtrict military diſcipline, will teach the habit of ſubjection. But are theſe the only particulars which ſhould mark the character of the citizens of a free ſtate? Fierceneſs, and a habit of perfect ſubjection, are qualities by which the ſoldiers of the King of Pruſſia are diſtinguiſhed above, almoſt, all other men: But are they, on that account, to be deemed the beſt ſubjects of a free government?

We have here ventured to exhibit a comprehenſive view of the nature of the ſubject, which, if it cannot be pronounced to be altogether without foundation, appears to merit the attention of the public, eſpecially of the landed gentlemen who have ſo deep an intereſt in the preſervation and conſtitution of the country.

In the next place, by repealing the laws of patronage, government would ſecure the firm attachment of the great body of the people. It is true, the Crown, at preſent, poſſeſſes many patronages, which enables it to gratify ſome individuals. But is this an object, eſpecially in the preſent times, to be put in competition with the firm and warm affections of the whole body of the people, which government would moſt certainly ſecure by repealing the patronage laws? While, on the other hand, their minds will be irritated, and their affections alienated, by the Crown's exerciſing that right, conſidering the manner in which it has been lately explained by the judicial determinations of the ſupreme eccleſiaſtical court.

Another very important effect would follow from the repeal of theſe laws; for it would poſſibly reclaim, or, at leaſt, prevent the growth of thoſe numerous and powerful ſeceſſions from the eſtabliſhed church, which, it is to be feared, may, ſome time hence, produce

duce a convulſion in the ſtate. From theſe ſeceſſions, we mean not to ſay, that any danger to civil liberty is to be apprehended: they are, according to our information, very firm and ſincere friends to liberty, both civil and eccleſiaſtical. But if, in time coming, they ſhould increaſe in numbers and influence, as they have done for a conſiderable time paſt, it is not unnatural to expect, that they ſhould demand the benefits of an eſtabliſhment; and, perhaps, a form of eccleſiaſtical policy, ſomewhat different from that hitherto received in Scotland; which, in all probability, would be attended with ſome commotions in the ſtate.

THE late proceedings in parliament, relative to the Scotch militia, have ſuggeſted another obſervation, which we muſt take the liberty of ſubmitting to the conſideration of the public.

UNDER the adminiſtration of the Marquis of Rockingham, ſo much diſtinguiſhed for liberal ſentiment, and love of liberty, it was not a little mortifying to the pride of every Scotchman, to obſerve, that ſome Engliſh gentlemen, connected with adminiſtration, making ſtill a diſtinction between the two parts of the kingdom, heſitated about the propriety of granting a militia to this country. It was ſtill more mortifying to perceive, that this heſitation proceeded from a jealouſy, which theſe gentlemen ſeemed to entertain, of

our

our ſentiments reſpecting civil liberty. In this ſituation we are bound, in juſtice to ourſelves, to inſiſt on a repeal of theſe impolitic laws, and for a more equal and juſt repreſentation of the people, in order to convince our neighbours, that we are beginning to entertain the ſame ſentiments of liberty with themſelves; and that as we, with confidence, truſt our liberties in their hands, they may, with equal confidence, pay the ſame compliment to us, by entruſting us with arms, which, like them, we ſhall employ in defence of our common rights, and of our excellent conſtitution.

BEFORE concluding this branch of the inquiry, it is proper to obſerve, that, in contending for theſe great objects of civil and religious liberty, the zeal of thoſe concerned in the conteſt ſhould be tempered with moderation, and the moſt perfect regard to the forms, as well as the ſpirit, of the conſtitution. The exertions of liberty have, at all times, been ſtigmatized by deſpotiſm, with the names of faction and licentiouſneſs. In excuſe for this deception, it muſt be confeſſed, that, in contending with liberty, it was a neceſſary artifice, on the part of deſpotiſm; for, allowing liberty its real name and qualities, deſpotiſm, it is believed, could never yet ſtand the event of a competition, among even the moſt profligate people, of whom the hiſtory of the world gives us any account.

EVEN

EVEN at the preſent day, there are not wanting men, both in parliament, and out of parliament, who never ceaſe to proclaim, that the people and their friends are running the courſe of licentiouſneſs, while they are only contending for the purity of the conſtitution, and endeavouring to ſtem the torrent of corruption, which threatens the deſtruction of that beautiful and ancient fabric; nay, there are men, who, infected with the fatal ſpirit of Toryiſm, have openly profeſſed to deſpiſe the people, after having, inſolently, reproached them, with the appellation of licentiouſneſs.

IT is not fit, that men of this deſcription ſhould be able to collect evidence, or the appearance of evidence, in ſupport of their ſyſtem, from the proceedings of the people, upon the preſent important occaſion. Let the people recollect, that while their deliberations and their actions are marked with firmneſs, they ſhould be conducted with moderation, as affording the moſt certain proſpect of obtaining the ends, which they have in view. Let the manner of their proceedings teſtify, that genuine and conſtitutional liberty is the object of their exertions. Let them, in every ſtep, and in the reſult of their deliberations, tell the enemies of conſtitutional freedom and liberal ſentiment, that they underſtand the diſtinction between liberty and licentiouſneſs; and that, while they deteſt the one, they will not relinquiſh the other, but

demand

demand it, with firmneſs, although ſome perſons, not without a degree of impiety, have choſen to give it an unhallowed name.

SECT. V.

General Obſervations.

THAT religion, of ſome kind or other, is eſſential to the exiſtence and ſupport of all political aſſociations, is a propoſition which appears to be incontrovertible. The impreſſions of true religion, or wild ſuperſtition, are univerſal as the human race, nor are they leſs powerful than they are univerſal. Hence, the inſpired founder of nations, no leſs than the deſigning impoſtor; the mild and impartial legiſlator, no leſs than the tyrannical and oppreſſive deſpot, have always found it neceſſary to reſort to the powerful influence of genuine theiſm, or extravagant ſuperſtitions, as beſt ſuited the different ſyſtems of political aſſociations, which they had in view to eſtabliſh.

WITH reſpect to our own country, we muſt obſerve, that, when the celeſtial voice of Freedom was allowed to be heard in Scotland, the ſyſtem of religion, as well as the manner of conducting it, underwent a material alteration. Under the tyranny and ſlavery of Rome, our religious ſyſtem was conducted by means of patronage and preſentation, in their full extent.

extent. The freedom and generoſity of ſentiment, introduced by the reformation, deteſted, as illiberal and unjuſt, theſe modes of conducting religion. Hence, in theſe more happy times, the rigour of patronage was, in a great meaſure, reſtrained; the operation of it was, often, altogether ſuſpended; at ſome periods, the very name of it was, almoſt, extinguiſhed, and Preſbyterian church government, which rejected patronage, was eſtabliſhed, in Scotland, upon a much more liberal plan than that of Epiſcopacy, in the nature of its inſtitution, more favourable to the abſolute power of princes.

INDEED, in peruſing the hiſtory of theſe times, we find, that, when the iron hand of arbitrary power ſwayed, Epiſcopacy with patronage was, even with us, the mode of conducting our religious ſyſtem. When freedom flouriſhed, Preſbyterian church government, which rejected and deteſted patronage, was always adopted. Of the truth of this propoſition, the public records and laws of the kingdom afford inconteſtable evidence.

AFTER the arbitrary reign of Charles I, patronage was aboliſhed by law *a*. Upon the reſtoration of Charles II, when the principles of Toryiſm began, again, to prevail, patronage, with all its appendages, was reſtored *b*. At the illuſtrious period

a Act Par. 1649, c. 39. *b* 1662, c. 3.

of the Revolution, when freedom reigned, patronage was aboliſhed *c*. Under the Tory miniſtry of Queen Ann, patronage was revived *d*. It is, however, now to be expected, that, under a Whig miniſtry, and under the mild government of George III, the odious name, together with the pernicious conſequences of the law of patronage, will be conſigned to everlaſting oblivion.

THESE facts and obſervations tend clearly to illuſtrate the intimate connection there is, between civil liberty, and the abolition of the patronage laws; and the reciprocal influence, upon each other, of particular religious ſyſtems, and particular forms of political governments.

WE may again obſerve, in general, that, if it were poſſible to conſider man, merely, in the light of a ſocial or political being, purſuing his own happineſs, in a preſent political ſtate, it might ſeem to be a matter of indifference to him, what religious ſyſtem ſhould be eſtabliſhed, if that ſyſtem ſhould be conducive to the great end of the ſociety, the public happineſs of the aſſociates. The Chriſtian ſyſtem is diſtinguiſhed, above all others, by a ſingular excellence. It contains a full and perfect revelation of genuine theiſm, and of a future ſtate of exiſtence, of rewards and of puniſhments; while, at the ſame

c 1690, c. 23. *d* 10th Ann, c. 12.

time,

time, it is, in many reſpects, admirably well adapted to promote our preſent political happineſs. It ſeems, therefore, to be repugnant to every principle of reaſon, and of public utility, by any particular mode of conducting this excellent ſyſtem, to pervert its nature, and, inſtead of uſing it to promote public happineſs, make it ſubſervient to the intereſt of individuals, and productive of public diſtreſs and debaſement to mankind. Such, however, we apprehend, is the manifeſt tendency of our religious ſyſtem, when conducted by the particular mode of patronage and preſentation.

PART II.

The Subject conſidered upon Principles of Law, Religion, and the Conſtitution of the Preſbyterian Church.

SECTION I.

How far the Right of Preſentation is compatible with the Conſtitution of the Church of Scotland.

A CIVIL conſtitution is defined to be, a compact, by which men agree to live together, under certain regulations, in a ſtate of ſociety; and an eccleſiaſtical conſtitution may be defined to be a compact, by which men agree to adopt and eſtabliſh, among them, a particular religious ſyſtem, with certain forms of maintaining it. Both conſtitutions are ſimilar, in this point, that the general will of the members of each, muſt conſtitute the ſovereign, or legiſlative authority, in each; in the one, with reſpect to matters, purely, civil; and in the other, with reſpect to matters, purely, eccleſiaſtical.

ALL the nations of Europe have adopted the Chriſtian ſyſtem, but different nations have choſen different methods of maintaining and conducting that ſyſtem, by different forms of church government. In Scotland, we have adopted, what is called, the Preſbyterian form; which conſiſts of kirk-ſeſſions, preſbyteries, ſynods, and general aſſemblies; and to this form, we give the name of the conſtitution of the Church of Scotland. Of this conſtitution, the general aſſembly is the ſovereign legiſlative body, as well as the ſupreme court of judicature. Theſe powers the church poſſeſſes, not only upon the general principles of eccleſiaſtical conſtitutions, which have been mentioned; ſhe enjoys them, likewiſe, by virtue of a particular act of parliament, eſtabliſhing the Preſbyterian form of church policy, which, by the fundamental law of the treaty of Union, is declared to be unalterable.

BETWEEN this and the Epiſcopal form of church government, eſtabliſhed in England, there is a material diſtinction. Epiſcopacy admits the ſupremacy of the king, but the Preſbyterian church owns no temporal ſuperior, either in her legiſlative or judicative capacity.

LET us now examine whether the power of a patron to compel the church to ſettle any miniſter he

chooſes, is, in any reſpect, reconcileable to this conſtitution of the church of Scotland.

We may, firſt, conſider the church, in relation to the legiſlative, or ſovereign powers with which, in matters, purely, eccleſiaſtical, ſhe is unqueſtionably inveſted. Of this nature, ſurely, is the ordination and ſettlement of a miniſter, in any particular charge. Can the patron, then, have a power to compel the church, which, in this caſe, is ſovereign, to ſettle any man he pleaſes, contrary to her will? We apprehend it is impoſſible; for this would be, to impoſe a ſovereign upon ſovereignty, which is manifeſtly abſurd. You muſt, therefore, either diveſt the church of her ſovereignty, or reſtrain the power of patrons. But diveſt the church of her ſovereignty, in matters, purely, eccleſiaſtical, and you annihilate the eccleſiaſtical conſtitution. No man, on either ſide of the queſtion, has yet ventured to contend for the annihilation, or even, for any alteration of the conſtitution of the church, which is unalterable. Of neceſſity, therefore, the right of preſentation, as being abſolutely incompatible with the nature of that conſtitution, muſt be entirely aboliſhed.

It is altogether untenable, and, ſo far as we can diſcover, ſupported by no principle of reaſon, to ſay, that the church poſſeſſes the power of forming the ſpiritual or paſtoral relation, between a miniſter and a pariſh;

a pariſh; when, at the ſame time, it is affirmed, in direct terms, that the church is compellable to ſettle any qualified preſentee, whom the patron ſhall preſent.

NOR is the caſe of the patrons better, when we conſider the church as a court of judicature, or, if we may uſe the expreſſion, as a ſupreme eccleſiaſtical magiſtrate, exerciſing her executive powers according to her own laws; for, to impoſe the will of a private individual upon a magiſtrate as the rule of his conduct, is as repugnant to all ideas of juſt government, as the impoſition of a ſovereign upon ſovereignty, is abſurd.

IT ſeems, therefore, in every view, clear, that the law of patronage, or right of preſentation, is adverſe to the conſtitution of the church of Scotland.

OF this propoſition, the proof depends not upon ſpeculative reaſoning alone. The univerſal voice, the univerſal practice, the uniform declarations, and, till of late, the uniform reſolutions and deciſions of the church, concur in eſtabliſhing the ſame doctrine. Of this, it is not neceſſary to enumerate the evidences. They are well known; and it would exceed the proper bounds of the preſent inquiry, to recite them. Let it ſuffice to ſay, that petition, remonſtrance, declared oppoſition to the law of

patronage,

patronage, diſtinguiſhed every aſſembly of the church of Scotland, in former times, of which the books of diſcipline [a], the claim of right, the reſolution of the Aſſembly 1736 *, and innumerable intermediate complaints, bear ample teſtimony. Diſcontent, murmur, open violence againſt

[a] Second Book of Diſcipline, ch. III. ch. XII.

* The reſolution is in the following words:

"*Edinburgh, May* 22, 1736.

"THE General Aſſembly having taken to their ſerious and deliberate conſideration, the report of the commiſſioners from the laſt General Aſſembly ſent to London, to apply for redreſs of the grievance of PATRONAGE; and that in order to deliberate what reſolution was proper for this aſſembly or this church to take, as to their future conduct with relation to this grievance; did thereupon agree upon this opinion and reſolution, That the church of Scotland is, by her duty and intereſt, obliged ſtill to perſiſt in uſing her beſt endeavours, from time to time, to be relieved from the grievance of patronage, until the ſame ſhall, by the bleſſing of God, prove ſucceſsful; and, for that end, that this aſſembly ſhall impower and direct the commiſſion to be appointed by them, to make due application to the king and parliament for redreſs of the ſaid grievance, in caſe a favourable opportunity for ſo doing ſhall occur during the ſubſiſtence of that commiſſion. And this aſſembly doubts not, that future General Aſſemblies of this church will, from time to time, be watchful and attentive to this weighty concern, and will not fail to make the like proper applications, whenever, by the providence of God, a fit occaſion ſhall offer itſelf. And as the intent of ſuch applications are in order to procure to be reſtored to this church a valuable right and privilege,

againſt the law of patronage, had diſtinguiſhed, almoſt, every pariſh in the kingdom, ſince the reſtitution of that law; of which the ſettlements of the pariſhes

privilege ſhe was poſſeſſed of at the *union* of the two kingdoms; ſo the grounds and reaſons of the claim of this church to be reſtored to the enjoyment of that right, are ſo ſtrong and pregnant, that, notwithſtanding the unſucceſsful event of the late applications, this aſſembly cannot but hope, that ſome like application, renewed at a proper ſeaſon, will prove ſucceſsful: And in order to ſet forth ſome of the reaſons of their hopes, and to direct their commiſſion as to the manner of ſuch application, if they ſhall ſee cauſe to make any, the aſſembly has reſolved and agreed, that the grounds of this church's claim for the redreſs of the grievance of patronage are, among others, theſe following:

"That in the declaration of the eſtates of the kingdom of Scotland in April 1689, containing the *claim of right*, and the offer of the crown to their Majeſties King William and Queen Mary; it is, among other things, for vindicating their ancient rights and liberties, declared, That *Prelacy* in the church has been a great and unſupportable grievance and trouble to this nation, and contrary to the inclinations of the generality of the people ever ſince the reformation, and therefore ought to be aboliſhed.

"That, in purſuance of this *claim of right*, ſeveral acts of parliament were made ſoon after the late happy revolution, comprehending the eſtabliſhment of this church in its doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline, and government; and particularly by the fifth act paſſed on the 7th of June 1690, *ratifying the Confeſſion of Faith, and ſettling Preſbyterian church government*, the ſame is expreſsly made in purſuance of the ſaid article in the *claim of right*. And as the ſaid fifth act contains, among other things, an expreſs ratification

of

parishes of Kilmarnock, Eagglashame, Shots, Dumblane, St. Ninian's, Fenwick, and many others, afford ample proof to the present times; and the numerous

of the first act of the parliament 1592, which act, in the close thereof, makes a proviso for presbyteries being obliged to receive qualified ministers presented by patrons; therefore, in the reviving, renewing, and confirming of this act, that article thereof relating to *patronages* is excepted, and it is declared, That the same shall thereafter be taken into consideration: which shews evidently, that patronages were not understood to be consistent or agreeable with that constitution of this church, which the legislature were then about to establish, in pursuance of the *claim of right*, and in compliance with the *inclinations* and principles of the generality of the people in Scotland.

"That accordingly, soon after this 5th act 1690, the 23d act, *concerning patronages*, was passed on the 19th July, in that same session of parliament; which annuls the power of patrons of presenting ministers, and thereby prevents the thrusting ministers upon congregations; and establishes another method of supplying vacant churches, which then became a part of the legal establishment of this church in pursuance of the *claim of right*, being a supplement to that which was reserved to further consideration by the 5th act 1690; and at the same time a valuable equivalent was given by that act to the patrons in lieu of their power of presenting.

"That the establishment of this church, which was thus renewed at the happy *revolution*, was confirmed and secured in the most solemn manner at the *union* of the two kingdoms; particularly by the 6th act 1707, which confirms the said act 1690, with the haill other acts of parliament relating thereto, in prosecution

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merous ſeceſſions which have broke off from theſe pariſhes, will convey to poſterity, ſome idea of the rigour and violence with which patrons have exerciſed a power which they ought never to have enjoyed.

SECT.

of the *claim of right*; and provides, *that the government of this church, as eſtabliſhed by the foreſaid acts of parliament, purſuant to the* claim of right, *ſhall remain and continue unalterable.* Which act is, by the parliaments of both kingdoms, ratified, and declared to be *a fundamental and eſſential condition of the union in all time coming*; and which appears evidently to comprehend the ſaid 23d act 1690, which was certainly one of the acts, and, next to the 5th act of that ſeſſion, was the principal act of parliament made in purſuance and in proſecution of the ſaid article of the *claim of right*.

"That notwithſtanding the ſecurity of this our happy eſtabliſhment, in all its parts, was as great and as ſolemn as it was poſſible for human laws and conſtitutions to deviſe or execute, yet in prejudice of that ſecurity, as we apprehend, the act in the 10th year of Queen Anne was paſſed, reſtoring to patrons the power of preſenting, and ſuffering them at the ſame time to retain the valuable equivalent which they received by the 23d act 1690. And this act 10mo *Annæ*, it is well known, and always has been declared, was impoſed upon this church by means of perſons of our own country, who were enemies to the *Proteſtant ſucceſſion*, as they ſoon after diſcovered in the ſtrongeſt manner, and enemies to this church by reaſon of her inviolable adherence to that ſucceſſion; and was by them intended to afflict and oppreſs this church, and to create diſcontents amongſt the people therein, and to open a door for patrons arbitrarily to impoſe upon the people, as miniſters, perſons proper for inſtilling into their minds principles of *diſloyalty* and *diſaffection* to the preſent happy conſtitution. Which circumſtance of the *ſeaſon* and *deſign* of

impoſing

SECT. II.

How far the Right of Preſentation is conſiſtent with the Nature of the Chriſtian Syſtem.

THE ſubject of the preſent ſection appears to have been, in ſome meaſure, already diſcuſſed; for, as it has been ſhewn, that the right of preſentation is incompatible with the conſtitution of the church of Scotland, which is built upon the Chriſtian ſyſtem, it would ſeem to follow, of conſequence, that ſuch a power muſt, likewiſe, be incompatible with the Chriſtian ſyſtem itſelf. But this propoſition may be demonſtrated

impoſing this grievance, which appears to us an infringement on our eſtabliſhed conſtitution, muſt ever afford an additional argument and encouragement in our applications to the royal family now reigning, and whom we daily pray GOD ever to preſerve and proſper.

"That accordingly, not long after the acceſſion of his late Majeſty of bleſſed memory, commiſſioners were ſent up from this church to make humble applications to his Majeſty for redreſs of this grievance of *patronages*, and other grievances which this church complained of; which commiſſioners had the honour of acceſs to and audience of his Majeſty, and received a moſt gracious anſwer, "That he was well ſatisfied of the good affection of "the church of Scotland, and ſhould be glad of an occaſion to "ſerve them." And the ſame commiſſioners had likewiſe the honour of an audience of their preſent Majeſties, then Prince and

demonſtrated upon other principles; for truth, like fire, collects ſtrength on all hands, and in every ſtep of its progreſs.

LET us, then, attend to the nature of the Chriſtian doctrine; let us compare it with the right of preſen-

and Princeſs of Wales; of whom the former was graciouſly pleaſed to anſwer, "That he would do all he could for the intereſt "of this church, and of this country in general:" And the then Princeſs was pleaſed to anſwer, "That ſhe was ſatisfied of "the good diſpoſition of the church of Scotland to the Proteſ- "tant ſucceſſion, and would not be wanting in what might be "for its advantage." After which there was ſomewhat done for the alleviating of this grievance of patronage, by an act paſſed in the 5th year of his late Majeſty: but by experience it has been ſince found, that that act of parliament has proved inſufficient for giving that relief to the church which we apprehend was intended by it; but, on the contrary, as the *grievous conſequences* of preſentations have ſince that time increaſed, and are felt very ſenſibly in many parts of this church, it was juſtly thought neceſſary lately to renew applications to his Majeſty; and we think it ſtill moſt juſt and fit, upon the firſt favourable occaſion that the providence of GOD ſhall offer, humbly to apply to his Majeſty and the parliament for redreſs of this grievance, being hopeful that the ſame may be ſucceſsful when we ſhall have full acceſs to repreſent the merits of the caſe, and particularly that this grievance was brought upon us contrary to the eſtabliſhment of this church, made at the glorious *revolution*, and ſolemnly confirmed and ſecured as an *eſſential condition* of the *union* of the two kingdoms,

tation, and we ſhall be able to reconcile them, when we can ſolve this paradox, that things, in their nature incapable of excluſive property, may be excluſively appropriated; ſooner than this, we can, ſcarcely, hope for ſucceſs in the attempt of reconciling the right of preſentation, with the Chriſtian ſyſtem.

WHAT is the doctrine of Chriſtianity? Is it not a ſpiritual ſubject, or right, common to all mankind, in which all have an equal intereſt, and, in its nature, incapable of being made the excluſive property of any perſon? This we hold to be altogether incontrovertible. If all men have, therefore, an equal right in the doctrine itſelf, muſt they not have an equal right in the method of maintaining and ſupporting their common intereſt? This muſt be allowed to be, equally, indiſputable. By what rule, then, or upon what principle of reaſon, does a patron pretend right to compel, or direct, or control the wills of men, in this reſpect?

ARE you a patron? Have you ever examined your own right? Know you its nature and origin? Can you inform us, whether it aroſe from the unhallowed ſoil of arbitrary power, from the deſigning craft of an impoſtor, or from the ſuperſtition and weakneſs of the people, in times of darkneſs?

IF

IF theſe are the foundations of your right, muſt you not be convinced of the futility of your pretenſions? If they are not, pray tell, for once, by what juſt authority, or upon what principle, you have aſſumed to yourſelf an excluſive right to the method of ſupporting a ſyſtem which is common to all, in which, all have an equal intereſt, and which is, in its nature, incapable of excluſive appropriation?

ARE you a private proprietor deriving right according to any of the legal methods of acquiring property? We anſwer, it is not poſſible you can be ſuch, for, as already obſerved, the thing to which you pretend an excluſive right, is incapable of excluſive appropriation; therefore, if excluſive property is the foundation of your right, it is, manifeſtly, untenable and abſurd.

BUT, to do you full juſtice, we are willing, that your right ſhall be tried, by every poſſible teſt; and, in the perplexity of your underſtanding, upon the ſubject, let it be ſuppoſed, that ſome learned Doctor, one of thoſe whom your tender patronage has reared, ſhould whiſper, in your ear, ſomething to the following purpoſe: "You have built, and endowed a "church, and therefore it ſeemed reaſonable, and "the people conſented, that you ſhould have the "right of patronage, and a power, in all future "ages, to be the ſole cuſtodier and conductor of

" their intereſts in Chriſtianity. *Patronum faciunt* " *dos, ædificatio, fundus.*"

WITHOUT being ſtartled at this diſplay of learning, of which, although you are not the immediate author, you may, in ſome meaſure, claim the merit, we would beg leave to aſk, in the *firſt* place, where is the evidence of the conſent ſaid to have been given by the people? In treating the matter in this light, it is not our intention, by the appearance of form, or legal ſubtility, to offer an injury to, or exclude the operation of material juſtice. We diſdain the art of ſhielding ourſelves, againſt the force of truth, under the cover of a mere defect of legal evidence, ariſing from want of records, or length of time. But, having looked, a little, into the hiſtory of endowments, we are able to affirm, without the hazard of effectual contradiction, that, in their origin, and for a conſiderable time after, rights of patronage and preſentation, in the ſenſe in which they are now explained, were neither claimed by the endowers, nor admitted by the people. Theſe pretended rights, like many other violations of the natural liberties of mankind, were the gradual production of ſucceſſive ages, which rolled away in diſmal revolutions, under the unhappy dominion of extravagant ſuperſtition, and an eccleſiaſtical policy, which included the boldeſt ſpecies of deſpotiſm, that human invention had

had ever diſcovered, and the moſt abſolute, that had ever acquired influence over the minds of men, or depraved the human character.

IN the *ſecond* place, we would contend, that not building, nor endowing, nor the conſent of the people, could alter the nature of things. What was, before, in its nature, incapable of excluſive property or alienation, muſt eternally remain ſo, and no Chriſtian can alienate his intereſt in Chriſtianity, nor, by conſequence, in the manner of conducting it; for, to remain a Chriſtian, and, at the ſame time, to renounce one's intereſt in Chriſtianity, or in the method of ſupporting it, is an abſurdity too evident, to be maintained.

THERE is only one other view, in which we can conceive it poſſible for you, to form the appearance of an argument, in ſupport of your pretended right. Let it, then, be ſuppoſed, that this right is a truſt in your perſon, for the common behoof of yourſelf and others; ſtill, however, upon this ſuppoſition, it is left for you to explain, by what rule of reaſon, or principle of juſtice, you can exerciſe your truſt, contrary to the right, the intereſt, and the declared remonſtrances of your conſtituents?

BUT, ſuppoſing that you had built and endowed a church; that, for this reaſon, the people had con-

ſented that you ſhould enjoy a right of patronage, and that ſuch conſent could be conſiſtent with Chriſtianity, ſtill, you have another difficulty to encounter, ariſing from the manner in which you, confeſſedly, hold your right, under the authority of ſome acts of parliament.

SECT. III.

How far the Rights of Preſentation, claimed by Scotch Patrons, are conſiſtent with Juſtice, ſo far as theſe Patrons poſſeſs both the Rights of Preſentation, and the Prices or Values of them.

THE act 1649, which aboliſhed patronage, conferred upon the patrons, by way of recompence, for their ſuppoſed loſs, a right to all the tithes in their reſpective pariſhes, which had not already been, heritably, diſponed by the church.

THE ſame right was reſerved to the patrons by the act 1690, which again aboliſhed patronage; and when patronage was reſtored, by the act of Queen Ann, the patrons were allowed to keep the tithes, which they had acquired by the act 1649 and 1690, as the prices, or values, of their rights of patronage.

FROM this deduction, it is plain, that, as matters ſtand at preſent, patrons are in poſſeſſion, both of the rights of patronage, and the values of them. They

They enjoy both the thing ſold, and the price which they received for it. It is, however, ſcarcely conſiſtent with any principle of reaſon or juſtice, that patrons ſhould be allowed to poſſeſs both theſe ſubjects. They cannot, therefore, complain that they ſhould be deprived of their rights of patronage, ſince they ſtill hold the values which had been originally given for them; and it would ſeem highly reaſonable, that the public juſtice ſhould now interpoſe, to ſtrip them of the enjoyment of rights which they have no ſolid title to hold, and which, as has been already evinced, they have exerciſed, in an arbitrary and pernicious manner.

SECT. IV.

How far the right of Preſentation can be ſupported, in Law or material Juſtice, by the manner in which Stipends are paid, in Scotland.

THERE is, however, another view, in which patrons, at leaſt, patrons and the heritors, in oppoſition to the people, have claimed the right of preſentation, upon a principle of juſtice. They maintain, that miniſters ſtipends are a burden affecting lands; and, as they pay the ſtipends out of their lands, they ought, in juſtice, to have the election of the miniſter, without being ſubject to any control from the people, who do not, in the ſmalleſt degree, contribute to his maintenance.

In

In examining the force of this argument, we might reſort to the principles already laid down, reſpecting the nature of the power, which is included in the idea of a right of preſentation. Upon the authority of theſe principles, which it will be difficult to controvert, without ſhewing, what has hitherto been deemed impoſſible, that patrons and heritors have an excluſive right to the benefits of the Chriſtian ſyſtem, we might maintain, that the payment of ſtipends, by patrons and heritors, could never give them a right, either to direct or diſpoſe of the ſpiritual concerns and intereſts of the people. But, in refuting an argument, however formidable, it is not neceſſary to reſort to reaſoning, however concluſive, when we are in a condition, effectually, to diſpute and diſprove the fact, upon which the argument is founded. In the preſent caſe, we are authoriſed, fundamentally, to deny the propoſition maintained by the patrons and heritors, and to affirm, that they do not, in fact, pay any part of the maintenance of miniſters, out of their eſtates or property.

The truth of what is here aſſerted, depends upon the eſtabliſhment of the right of tithes, as the proper patrimony of the church. But, in order to ſet the matter in a clear light, it is by no means neceſſary to trace, in detail, the hiſtory of tithes, either in their origin or progreſs. This is a taſk,

which,

which, without affording much information upon the point in diſpute, would be extremely intricate and unentertaining, and which we do not think ourſelves qualified to undertake. It is ſufficient, for the preſent purpoſe, to ſay, that, at a very remote period, beyond memory, and almoſt beyond record, the church acquired a right to a certain portion of the fruits of lands, as her proper patrimony. This right was not a perſonal obligation upon proprietors of land to account to the church, for a proportion of the fruits, but, as lawyers ſpeak, was a right of property, or *jus in re*, in the fruits themſelves, to a determinate extent. The church's right to the tithes, to this extent, was as full and abſolute, as that of the landed proprietor to the remainder of the fruits, and to the land itſelf. Whether this portion of the fruits was conſecrated to the proper uſe of the church, by divine or human inſtitution, it is altogether immaterial to inquire; the complete legal eſtabliſhment of the right itſelf, in the church, at a very remote period, being beyond a doubt. The object of the appropriation, certainly, was the maintenance of that ſacred order of men who ſhould devote their lives and their labours, to the ſervice of the public, and of God, in the adminiſtration of religious affairs: accordingly, that portion of the fruits, to which the church had thus acquired right, was, for ages, applied in conformity to its original object

and

and deſtination; and, ſo far as is neceſſary, continues ſtill to be employed, in the ſame manner.

FROM this ſhort view of the nature and eſtabliſhment of the right of tithes in the church, it appears, with ſufficient clearneſs, that the ſtipend, or maintenance of clergymen, has been paid out of the proper eſtate or patrimony of the church herſelf. It follows, of neceſſary conſequence, that patrons and heritors, any more than other perſons, do not pay, and can, in no proper ſenſe, be ſaid to pay the ſtipends of the clergy, which, as already obſerved, are paid out of the eſtate of the church, the natural and original fund of payment.

THE caſe is not varied, in Scotland, by the different laws which have been there enacted, annexing certain tithes to the Crown, giving the right of certain tithes to patrons, and authoriſing valuations and ſales of tithes; for all theſe laws are, expreſsly, made without prejudice to the right of the church in the tithes, ſo far as extends to a proper and reaſonable maintenance for the clergy. Accordingly, to that extent, the tithes continue ſtill ſubject to the original right of the church, into whatever hands they may come. In purchaſing lands, miniſters ſtipends are always deducted from the rental, ſo that no buyer pays for that part of the tithes which is allocated

allocated for miniſters ſtipends; in ſhort, there is no view, in which the heritors or patrons can, with truth or propriety, be ſaid to pay the maintenance of the clergy of Scotland. In England, no man could venture to utter an idea of that kind, where the clergy draw the tithes as their property, and apply them to their maintenance. In Scotland, the foundation of the right of the clergy to a maintenance, is the ſame as in England; and the only difference lies in the mode of obtaining poſſeſſion of that portion of the tithes which belongs to them. In England, the whole tithes are drawn *ipſis corporibus*. In Scotland, this ſeldom or never happens. Heritors are here intitled, with a few exceptions, to have their tithes valued againſt lay-titulars; and, with reſpect to the clergy, their right in the tithes, is limited to a reaſonable aliment payable at ſtated terms. But, in both nations, it is moſt certain, the maintenance of the clergy is furniſhed, not out of the private eſtates of any perſons, but from the proper patrimony of the church, anciently, appropriated to that beneficent purpoſe.

SUCH being the caſe, there is no pretence in reaſon, nor any foundation in fact, for the argument deduced, by patrons and heritors, from the payment of ſtipends. It follows, that their claim to the election of miniſters, ariſing from that

that ſuppoſed principle of juſtice, is altogether unſupportable.

BUT if it were poſſible to maintain the ſolidity of this argument deduced from the payment of ſtipends, though equally deſtitute of foundation in fact and principle, it would, almoſt, in every inſtance, prove fatal to the patron's right of preſentation; for, it often happens, that a patron has neither lands, nor reſidence in the pariſh, to which his right of preſentation extends. The real and ſubſtantial landholders, out of whoſe lands the ſtipends are paid, muſt, therefore, according to the doctrine under conſideration, be the only perſons who have any colourable pretenſion to the election of miniſters; and were the conteſt only between them, and the patron, a man often without property, reſidence, or intereſt, of any kind, in the pariſh, no perſon, judging with impartiality and attention, could heſitate, a moment, to declare in favour of the great and reſpectable body of landholders, who have a deep and permanent intereſt, and an extenſive natural influence, in the different pariſhes, in which they reſide.

PART

PART III.

Patronage and Preſentation conſidered upon Principles of Public Utility.

SECTION I.

General Idea of the Right of Preſentation conſidered as adverſe to the Public Utility.

WE have, already, opened a view of the ſubject of the preſent ſection, in treating of the importance of the queſtion. It only remains, that we ſhould advance farther into the field, and, in taking a more accurate and extenſive ſurvey of the different objects with which we are ſurrounded, endeavour to diſcover their ſalutary and pernicious qualities, with reſpect to the public intereſt.

MANY perſons, of excellent underſtandings, and benevolent tempers, from want of habit, cannot, eaſily, enter into reaſonings, however concluſive, which are ſtrictly legal, or merely ſpeculative, reſpecting the nature and conſequences of the right of preſen-

tation. But there are few perſons, who will not feel themſelves affected, by open violations of natural rights, and by inſtitutions which neceſſarily degrade the human character, and tend to introduce a total indifference to the intereſts of religion, morals, and liberty. Theſe views, in which we now propoſe, chiefly, to treat the ſubject, will peculiarly affect the minds of thoſe, who yet preſerve a love of country, a ſenſe of liberty, and a regard to the other natural rights of mankind.

THE right of preſentation, as formerly explained, is adverſe to the public utility, in the different following views. 1. It is an infringement of an evident natural right, which, by its tendency to make violations of right familiar, diminiſhes our abhorrence of theſe enormities, and thereby endangers the ſecurity of public liberty, the pureſt ſource of public happineſs. 2. It degrades the natural dignity of man, and is extremely injurious to morals. 3. It extinguiſhes the ideas and impreſſions of liberty, among the great body of the people. 4. It tends to impair the impreſſions of religion, and thereby to corrupt the morals of the people, ſo far as morals depend upon a ſtrictneſs and purity of religious ſentiments. 5. It tends likewiſe to introduce ſimony among the clergy, a pernicious and deteſtable ſpecies of corruption of manners. Theſe different particulars ſhall be conſidered, ſeparately, in ſome of the following ſections.

SECT.

SECT. II.

Patronage is a violation of an evident natural Right, attended with pernicious Conſequences.

THE election of the man who is to adminiſter to us in the ſacred and important rites of religion, is a right no leſs natural, and no leſs manifeſt, than that of chuſing a ſervant, or a companion for life. The happineſs of our exiſtence depends, in a great meaſure, upon the election of the former, as well as the choice of the latter. If we ſhould attempt to produce evidence of truths, which bear ſo ſtrong a reſemblance to ſelf-evident propoſitions, it might be ſaid, either, that we were paſſionately fond of demonſtration, or that, indulging an unbecoming degree of arrogance, we had judged, improperly, of the capacities of our readers. We ſhall, therefore, lay it down, as an incontrovertible propoſition, that the election of miniſters, is a fundamental natural right, of which the people cannot be deprived, without violence and injuſtice.

To ſupport this propoſition, we purpoſe not to trace the hiſtory of paſtoral election, from the Apoſtolic age, down to the preſent times. We mean not to enter into critical diſſertations, upon ſcriptural ex-

preſſions and quotations, relative to the right of electing the miniſters of the Goſpel. It is very diſtant from our intention, to accompany, through the ignorace and depravity of ſucceſſive ages, the progreſs of Roman ſuperſtition, in order to diſcover at what period, or if, at any period, the encroachments of this pernicious power introduced and eſtabliſhed that ſpecies of eccleſiaſtical tyranny, for which, patrons and their friends, ſo eagerly, contend. Overlooking all theſe tedious, and, as we conceive, uſeleſs inveſtigations, we appeal, with confidence, to the plain and obvious principles of natural liberty, upon the authority of which, we cannot heſitate to affirm, that paſtoral election is the natural and fundamental right of the people.

AWARE of the force and juſtice of this argument, the friends of patronage have maintained, that natural liberty, in its utmoſt extent, is inconſiſtent with civil ſociety, and that, therefore, when man entered into a civil ſtate, he, in a great meaſure, made a ſurrender, or reſignation of his natural liberty.

IF we ſhould be diſpoſed to admit the truth of the aſſertion here made by the friends of patronage, it might be ſhown, that it could not affect the preſent queſtion. This ſuppoſed reſignation of natural liberty, however it may be underſtood among the paſſionate admirers, and zealous

zealous partizans of deſpotiſm, muſt, in the opinion of reaſonable men, relate only to ſuch natural rights, as cannot be exerciſed without deſtroying, or hurting, eſſentially, the public happineſs. If there are ſuch rights, the public good, which is the great object of all political aſſociations, requires, that proper laws ſhould be made to reſtrain them. It would not, however, be difficult, were it neceſſary, to demonſtrate, that the election of miniſters, contended for by the people, is not a right of that nature, and, conſequently, cannot fall under any reſignation, or ſurrender, of natural liberty, which is ſuppoſed to have accompanied, or to have reſulted from the eſtabliſhment of civil ſociety.

BUT it is unneceſſary, at preſent, to enter into a diſcuſſion of that ſubject. We ſhall, afterwards, have occaſion to make ſome obſervations upon it. Meanwhile, we purpoſe to diſpute the juſtice of the opinion, that man, by entering into a ſtate of civil ſociety, made a ſurrender of his natural rights and liberty. But this opinion, becauſe men of learning and genius have maintained it, muſt be controverted with reſpect, and with diffidence.

UNLESS we ſhould adopt the opinion of a late remarkable and ingenious writer, that, anterior to the eſtabliſhment of civil ſociety, man poſſeſſed no ideas, any more than human ſhape; it would ſeem reaſonable to allow, that, in changing his condi-

tion, and in renouncing the ſolitary, for the ſocial life, he muſt have underſtood, that the change ſhould be beneficial, not hurtful, to his exiſtence. To exalt his character, not to debaſe it; to preſerve his native dignity, not to deſtroy it; to improve his rational faculties, not to impair them: in a word, to better his condition, not to render it worſe, muſt have been his natural propenſity, his original intention, and muſt have entered deep into the end and deſign of the aſſociation. Theſe, therefore, are fundamental laws, or articles of the original conſtitution of ſociety, which can neither be diſpenſed with, nor diſſolved, without diſſolving the ſociety itſelf.

WE are not viſionary enough to imagine, that, at the inſtitution of civil ſociety, an expreſs covenant, to this purpoſe, was entered into, by any particular form of words, or other external mark of conſent, in any nation in the world. But we may venture, without fear of reprehenſion, to maintain, that an agreement of that kind, muſt, neceſſarily, be implied in the very nature of the inſtitution of civil ſociety. Let us figure, for a moment, a ſociety entered into, in order to render the condition of man worſe, to debaſe his character, to extinguiſh the exerciſe of his rational powers, to deprive him of every natural right! Of ſuch a ſtate of civil ſociety, who can conceive, who ever did conceive, without horror and deteſtation?

tion? The reverſe of the propoſition, therefore, muſt be true; and we turn, with infinite pleaſure, towards that view of civil ſociety, which informs us, that it was inſtituted for the improvement of our faculties, the refinement of our manners, and the preſervation of our natural rights and liberties.

WE have admitted, that, at the formation of civil ſociety, in no nation in the world, was there an expreſs covenant, with legal ſolemnities entered into, and containing the conditions, or ſtipulations, by which the ſociety was to be regulated, and conducted; nor was it requiſite to have recourſe to ſuch expreſs ſolemn compact, or agreement. It was, neceſſarily, implied, in the very nature of the thing, that man's condition ſhould not be rendered worſe, by a change, only, in the manner of his exiſtence.

BUT if, at the eſtabliſhment of civil ſociety, there was no formal contract entered into reſpecting the preſervation of natural rights; far leſs can it be maintained, that there was, upon this occaſion, any expreſs ſurrender or reſignation of the natural liberties of man. Nor in favour of this hypotheſis, is there room, even, for preſumption, or implication; for, when we repreſent to our imaginations, and endeavour to reconcile to our feelings, the idea of a ſociety formed, for the debaſement of the human character, by the extinction of natural and original rights, we behold

behold the picture, with horror; and, in the contemplation of such a society, we almost begin to look, with emotions of regret, towards the solitary freedom and habitation of the wilderness, which, we find, we had exchanged for the insolence of tyranny, and the infamy of chains!

WE are, therefore, altogether unable to discover any compact, express or implied, any feeling of nature, or any principle of reason or expediency, upon which the pretended resignation of natural liberty, at the formation of civil society, can be supported. It is, indeed, very difficult to conceive, that an institution, such as that of civil society, evidently calculated to better the state of man, could have adopted a stipulation, to render his condition worse, by stripping him of his natural liberty. For such a stipulation would be altogether inconsistent with the nature and end of the association.

NOR was a resignation, or deprivation of natural liberty, more inconsistent with the design and object of civil society, than it was unnecessary. And, this is a view of the subject which appears to merit peculiar attention. For, in a state of nature, any more than in that of civil society, a man possesses not any right to do an injury, or commit an act of violence against another. Why, therefore, impose restraints upon his natural liberties, at the formation

tion of civil ſociety; ſince nature herſelf had given no man a right, in any reſpect, to hurt, or deſtroy his fellow man? It was only neceſſary to collect and unite the force of all, againſt any individual, who ſhould be daring enough to violate the precepts of natural, or civil law, and, thereby, to promote the general ſecurity, from which reſults general happineſs. This is, in fact, the proper object of the inſtitution of civil ſociety, and not that falſe and deteſted ſecurity, which ſhould ariſe, from a deprivation of the natural liberties of mankind.

ALTHOUGH, therefore, we entertain a perfect reſpect for the characters of thoſe men who have inculcated the idea of a reſignation of natural liberty, at the inſtitution of civil ſociety, we cannot diſcover, that their opinions are juſt, or their reaſonings concluſive. We muſt, of conſequence, hold, that, according to the fundamental principles of civil life, man is entitled to exerciſe his natural liberty, which authoriſes no injury in ſociety, nor any diſturbance of the general happineſs. It follows, that, when the people are deprived of the eſſential natural right of chuſing their own paſtor, who is to adminiſter to them in the ſacred and important rites of religion, there is an act of violence committed againſt them, to which, neither their pride, nor their wiſdom, ought

ought to ſubmit; for, while it inſults their feelings, it is equally adverſe to their deepeſt intereſts, and to the ſoundeſt principles of public utility.

THE preſervation of untainted liberty, like that of female chaſtity, is a matter of the utmoſt delicacy and importance; and, if the rudeneſs of the compariſon might be pardoned, we ſhould ſay, that the operation of deſpotiſm over the human mind, ſeems to bear a reſemblance to the progreſs of depravity, in the female character. When a woman has, once, tranſgreſſed the laws of chaſtity, the pride of virtue is evaniſhed. When the guards are corrupted, or their affections alienated, the life of the Sovereign is no longer ſecure. It is the ſame with the morals of a woman, who, in ſubmitting to a ſingle act of diſhonour, has betrayed and yielded up, at once, her pride and her delicacy, the natural defenders of her innocence. The temptation which firſt preſented itſelf, like the profeſſions of deſpotiſm, was, perhaps, covered over with fair and honourable pretenſions, and its effects gradual and imperceptible. The miſtake was only diſcovered, in the contempt and miſery, which followed the ſurrender of her virtue, when reſiſtance became difficult, and the recovery of innocence, impoſſible.

IN the ſame manner, if the delicate pride of liberty be, once, loſt; if men have, once, contracted a habit of

of ſubmitting, without reſiſtance or reſentment, to any violations of their natural rights, however palliated or diſguiſed, it muſt be allowed, by every one who has ever given the leaſt attention to the human character, or traced the hiſtory of government, that the ſecurity of public liberty, and of the moſt important rights of the people, is in the moſt imminent danger of being ſacrificed upon the altars of Deſpotiſm. Unjuſt Power, like a villain, whoſe object is deceit, and who feels the want of a proper or original title to our eſtimation, ſteals in upon us, with many fair external profeſſions, and in a gradual and imperceptible manner. Having every bias of human nature to contend with, tyranny muſt, of neceſſity, have recourſe to artifice, in order to accompliſh its purpoſes. Accordingly, as a compenſation for our liberties, it pretends to offer up to us the benefits of ſecurity and tranquillity, as if it were the nature and tendency of liberty, to deſtroy, and not to preſerve theſe ſources of public happineſs. Men, however, ſuch is the imperfection of human nature, have often yielded to the deluſion, and have only been convinced of their error, by the painful reſtraints of thoſe chains, which the arts of deſpotiſm, aided by their own timidity and credulity, had fabricated. Where they expected to meet with inviolable ſecurity, they have found a power, the inſo-

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lence of which, can ſuffer no control, and knows no moderation. Where they, fondly, hoped for the bleſſings of peace and tranquillity, they have been, unwarily, ſurrounded with the bars of a priſon, and the horrors of a dungeon.

THE truth of theſe obſervations muſt be obvious to every one who has traced the origin, and progreſs, and operations of deſpotiſm, in thoſe unhappy countries which it has pervaded, and where, by degrading and debaſing the human character, it has introduced ſcenes of miſery and oppreſſion, which, in extent and duration, exceed all power of deſcription. Theſe obſervations, too, if they do not clearly demonſtrate, open, at leaſt, a general view of the danger of ſubmitting to any violations of our natural rights; for when theſe are permitted, with impunity, it is not probable that we can long poſſeſs a firm ſecurity for any of thoſe rights of which we boaſt, or thoſe enjoyments which contribute to our happineſs. One act of injuſtice, in the architecture of deſpotiſm, ſhall form the baſis of another. One infringement of natural right, committed with impunity, ſhall give encouragement to another, of a more deep and dangerous nature. The violence of yeſterday, if it has been ſubmitted to, ſhall be pleaded upon, as a precedent

dent and example, for that of to-morrow; till, at laſt, an accumulation of violence, ſhall, on the one hand, deface the impreſſions and ideas of liberty, and, on the other, ſhall, completely, eſtabliſh the empire of deſpotiſm, by the utter extinction or deprivation of the moſt important natural rights.

SUCCESSFUL violence, in this manner, aſſumes the name, and arrogates to itſelf the prerogatives of legal government; and truſting, with an inſolent confidence, to the weakneſs and ignorance of the people, it dares to ſtigmatiſe, with the opprobrious appellations of faction and licentiouſneſs, all thoſe who ſhall venture to reſiſt its power, or diſpute its authority. Such always has been, and ſuch always will be the conſequence of ſubmitting to infringements and violations of our natural liberties, whether civil, or religious. The efforts of the people, even in the preſent times, to recover the exerciſe of a fundamental natural right, are inſulted by patrons and their partizans, with the names of faction, ſedition, licentiouſneſs, and even fanaticiſm, and enthuſiaſm. The inſolence of unjuſt power, can be exceeded by nothing, but the depravity of the people who ſubmit to it!

THE application of theſe principles, to the caſe under conſideration, is ſufficiently obvious, and

needs no further illuſtration. The law of patronage, as it is now eſtabliſhed and explained by the determinations of the ſupreme eccleſiaſtical court, is a deep and open violation of the natural liberty of the people, in a matter of the laſt importance. It remains, therefore, to be conſidered, by every impartial man, and every lover of his country, whether, under the circumſtances which have been mentioned, it is conſiſtent with public utility, that a law of ſuch a complexion, ſhould be allowed to ſtand unrepealed, upon the ſtatute-book of a country, which boaſts of the extent of its freedom, and the excellence of its conſtitution.

IT merits attention, too, and ought to ring the alarm to the mind of every man, who reſpects the liberty of the conſtitution, that this manifeſt infringement of the fundamental rights of the people, as might, naturally, be expected, has been the conſtant concomitant of towring deſpotiſm, whenever it appeared, or attempted to appear, in the government of this country. Here, we will not anticipate the reflections which, naturally, occur to men of liberal ſentiment, and lovers of freedom; but, we truſt, that the good ſenſe of the people will form the proper concluſion; for, though it may, ſometimes, be miſled, it will not, always, continue deaf to the voice of liberty recommending to them an object of

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the deepeſt importance, both to their ſpiritual, and temporal concerns.

THESE obſervations have been ſuggeſted, in order to evince the impropriety of ſubmitting to the law of patronage, conſidered as a violation of a moſt important natural right.

WE proceed, therefore, to the ſecond view, in which we purpoſe to ſhew, that the law of patronage is inconſiſtent with public utility, as it degrades the natural dignity of man, and is attended with a material injury to morals.

SECT. III.

Patronage degrades the natural dignity of Man, and is extremely injurious to Morals.

IT is not the reſult of any profound obſervation of human nature, to ſay, that a certain degree of conſcious dignity, or ſelf-eſtimation, is no leſs intimately connected with the amiable, and the noble virtues, than with ſound morality. The truth of this propoſition is every where admitted, and is the foundation of many of the received maxims of common life. It is, univerſally, agreed, that little confidence can be repoſed in the integrity of perſons of the very loweſt rank; who, as they poſſeſs no property, and have not the enjoyment of

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thoſe rights which, naturally, inſpire ſelf-eſtimation, have no very ſtrong ſenſe, or reſpect of character. In this ſituation, they are deſtitute of the firmeſt baſis of morality; for, as there is, ſcarcely, a place from which they can deſcend, either in rank or ſelf-eſtimation, they have nothing to fear from any act of immorality, leſs than that which infers a corporal, or a capital puniſhment; hence, the univerſal depravity of the very inferior orders of men, which is ſo often, and ſo loudly complained of, and which yet, many of the inſtitutions of the country, are calculated, in their very nature, to produce. Of theſe the law of preſentation is a conſpicuous inſtance; which, as it deprives the people of the exerciſe of an important natural right, tends to diminiſh their ſenſe of ſelf-eſtimation, to degrade them, even in their own opinion, and, of courſe, to prepare them for every ſpecies of meanneſs, of which, the want of a conſcious dignity of character is, naturally, productive.

IT is in vain to teach lectures of morality, or to read precepts of religion, when men are reduced to a ſituation in which they are degraded in their own opinion, or poſſeſs no proper conceptions of ſelf-eſtimation. This, in the familiar, though lively expreſſion of Scripture, is to ſow ſeed among rocks, and upon barren ground, where it cannot grow, becauſe there is no ſoil fit to receive it. But we forbear following this Text-book, ſince it is the practice

tice of the preſent day, to brand, with the names of fanatics and enthuſiaſts, all thoſe who ſhall venture to borrow either ideas or expreſſion from the ſacred Scriptures.

IT is, no doubt, true, that religion itſelf, the Chriſtian ſyſtem, in particular, inſpires the human mind, with a ſpecies of dignity. The original purity and perfection of human nature, which are, every where, inculcated and allowed; the natural equality of mankind, oppoſed to the artificial and frivolous diſtinctions of ſociety; the relation which all men bear to God, as their common parent; the intimate connection, and intercourſe, which ſhall ſubſiſt between them, and that omnipotent Being, in a future ſtate of eternal felicity; theſe are all circumſtances which have a natural tendency to elevate the mind; and which, if they were not counteracted by other particulars, would have a very beneficial influence upon morals. But we cannot avoid remarking, that the foundation of that ſpecies of dignity, which is inſpired by religion, has been laid in too remote a ſituation, to make very deep impreſſions, or to regulate, in a lively and forcible manner, the conduct of human action. It depends upon circumſtances, which are not ſtrictly connected with human affairs, do not immediately affect the ſenſes of mankind, and cannot, therefore, have any conſiderable influence on their manners, in common life.

THE diguity of religion engages men in the contemplation of objects of a ſpiritual, and very exalted nature; but theſe, not being obvious to the ſenſes, nor connected with the affairs of this world, are not eaſily underſtood; while, at the ſame time, they, almoſt conſtantly, occupy the minds of thoſe who, from their ſituations, are not permitted to derive dignity or importance, from objects, which relate to the adminiſtration of temporal affairs. By that habitual occupation of the mind concerning ſubjects, purely, ſpiritual, unconnected with human affairs, and of which, from their ſublimity and difficulty of comprehenſion, we can form no clear or perfect conceptions, the mind is, naturally, and, neceſſarily, thrown into that ſort of agitation, which has been denominated enthuſiaſm. This affection of the mind, which diſcovers, at once, the incoherence and the fierceneſs of inſanity, and degrades man very far below his natural level, appears, in this manner, to be nothing elſe than the natural and neceſſary effect of that ſyſtem which directs the attention of the mind to an exceſſive contemplation of ſpiritual and immaterial objects, of inconceivable magnitude, and difficult comprehenſion. The mind is, thereby, expanded and elated, to an unnatural degree, without being able to form any adequate or diſtinct conception of thoſe immenſe objects, by which, it feels itſelf ſo conſtantly occupied, and ſo vehemently agitated.

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IT may, therefore, be juſtly preſumed, that the very ſpirit, as well as the diſagreeable conſequences of enthuſiaſm are produced by the law of patronage, and by thoſe other inſtitutions which, leaving the people the exerciſe of no important right relative to the adminiſtration of civil affairs, limit the efforts of their underſtandings, and the direction of their minds, to the contemplation, entirely, of ſpiritual and ſublime ſubjects, which are as far above their comprehenſion, as, they are unconnected with human life. Thoſe perſons, therefore, muſt have little regard to conſiſtency of character, or reaſoning, who reproach the people for enthuſiaſm, and, at the ſame time, inſiſt upon the preſervation or enactment of inſtitutions, ſuch as the patronage laws, by which the very ſpirit of enthuſiaſm is excited and introduced. He has never paid the leaſt attention to the nature of the human character, who thinks, that the manners and conduct of men, are not tinctured, and even formed, by the habitual occupations of their minds, and the effects of their ſituations in life. It muſt, therefore, be attributed to an extreme ignorance of the human character, or to a ſingular love of paradoxical appearances, to expect, that while the people are, with regard to religious affairs, confined, ſolely, to the contemplation of ſpiritual ſubjects of very difficult conception, while they

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are allowed the exerciſe of no important right, in the adminiſtration of civil government, they ſhould, in theſe circumſtances, preſerve the natural dignity, and ſanity of their minds, by being perfectly exempted from the ſpirit, and influence of enthuſiaſm, which is the natural and neceſſary effect of the inſtitutions of their country.

LET the enemies of enthuſiaſm, therefore, if they are ſerious, concur in the immediate abolition of the patronage laws; which, among other circumſtances, have contributed to the introduction of that unhappy ſpecies of depravity, and which ſtill contribute to its preſervation and influence, upon the minds of the people. Let the people be reſtored to the enjoyment of the natural right of electing their own paſtors. Let them be permitted to mix the dignity of religion, with ſome ſhare of that which ariſes from the adminiſtration of important affairs, connected with common life, and which immediately affect their ſenſes; and, truſting to the natural effects of natural cauſes, we may venture to conclude, that the ſpirit of enthuſiaſm will, by degrees, decay, and ceaſe to influence their manners or their conduct. The minds of the people will be, thereby, abſtracted, and, in ſome meaſure, alienated, from an intenſe and inceſſant contemplation of objects which they cannot comprehend, and by which, therefore, they

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muſt be, perpetually, diſordered and diſtracted. The original dignity, and compoſure of their minds, will be reſtored and preſerved; their religion will become rational, perhaps, liberal, like that which equally deſpiſes and deteſts the ſpirit and influence of enthuſiaſm; and, the purity of their manners, formed by the natural dignity of their character, and the importance which they feel, will become conſpicuous and permanent.

IT, perhaps, will be ſaid, that paſtoral election is a ſpiritual right, which, according to the principles we have endeavoured to eſtabliſh, will have the effect of exciting, inſtead of eradicating the ſpirit and influence of enthuſiaſm, among the people. This difficulty, however, admits of an eaſy ſolution. The end and object of the election, is, no doubt, ſpiritual edification. But the election itſelf, or the act of voting, is an exerciſe of a natural right, and of a natural and juſt power, perfectly familiar to the ideas and conceptions of the people; and, while it tends, in the manner already explained, to extinguiſh the impreſſions of enthuſiaſm, it will ſerve to promote that ſenſe of ſelf-eſtimation, which, by contributing to raiſe the ſentiments of the people above every ſpecies of meanneſs, is ſo extremely favourable to purity of manners. To every man, therefore, who either loves

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the liberty, or poſſeſſes any degree of anxiety, in relation to the morals of his country, it muſt be an object of no inconſiderable importance, to excite and preſerve this ſenſe of ſelf-eſtimation among the people, unmixed, ſo far as is poſſible, with any tincture of either infidelity or enthuſiaſm.

THAT there are functions and ſituations, which have a natural tendency to elevate the human character, cannot be diſputed. Let a man be placed in that rank in life, which inſpires a proper ſenſe of ſelf-eſtimation; let him be accuſtomed to the exerciſe of exalted rights, and juſt power; he becomes noble, intrepid, and manly. Hence, the delicate pride, that can ſuffer no reproach; the high ſenſe of honour, that can ſtoop to no meanneſs; and thoſe amiable virtues; which all characteriſe, and diſtinguiſh the manners of the nobility, and are the natural effects of that ſenſe of ſelf-eſtimation, which is inſpired by their rank in life, and by the exerciſe of rights, connected with their rank and ſituation. It muſt, however, be admitted, that this rule is not without exception. In the elevated rank of the nobility, there are, unexpectedly, found, characters of complete depravity, infected with every ſpecies of meanneſs, and diſtinguiſhed by the moſt deſperate and daring offences; while the very inferior ranks, ſometimes, produce examples

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of the moſt ſplendid virtues, and the moſt exalted dignity of ſentiment. But theſe are ſingularities ariſing from a peculiarity of circumſtances, and deſtroy not the general principle which we have maintained; for all the world concurs in aſcribing to the nobility, in every country, a high ſenſe of honour and of ſelf-eſtimation, which, often, produces exalted characters, and amiable manners; and, almoſt, always, preſerves them from the meaner, and more deſpicable vices of mankind.

WE purpoſe not, here, to accompliſh, what appears to be impoſſible, to communicate the ideas, the virtues, and the dignity of the nobility, to the common maſs of the people. But, it is certain, that, by conferring on them the exerciſe of rights, ſimilar, in their effects, to thoſe which form the character of the nobility, they would acquire a ſenſe of ſelf-eſtimation, which would raiſe them above the meanneſſes to which they are addicted; and which, in that view, would have a moſt extenſive, and beneficial influence upon their morals.

IT will, on the other hand, be readily admitted, that there are functions and occupations which, in their nature, infallibly, degrade and debaſe the human character. Let a man be accuſtomed to a conſtant courſe of implicit ſubmiſſion, without exer-

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ciſing any will or judgment of his own; let him have no employment, but that of providing food for himſelf, like the inferior animals; he will ſoon partake of the ſame nature, and become irrational, ſervile, dejected, and baſe. Hence, the univerſal and complete depravity of ſlaves, in thoſe countries, where abſolute ſlavery had, unhappily, prevailed. Of the morality of ſlaves, accordingly, no man has ever yet heard; and the reaſon, according to the principles we have explained, is ſufficiently obvious. In the inſtitutions of ſlavery, which conſiſted in an utter extinction or deprivation of natural and civil rights, the ſlaves, by being excluded from the claſs of legal perſons, and other circumſtances, were reduced to a ſituation, in which they could feel no ſenſe of ſelf-eſtimation, and in which, of courſe, there could be no foundation for morals.

IF, in this manner, complete ſlavery, which conſiſts in a total extinction or deprivation of rights, introduces a total and univerſal corruption of character, it will be allowed, that a partial depravity of manners muſt be the natural conſequence of the patronage laws, and other inſtitutions, which operate a partial ſlavery, by a partial extinction and deprivation of natural rights.

BUT, indeed, it would ſeem, that if patronage prevail,

prevail, the ſituation of the common people of Scotland carries a ſtronger reſemblance to a total, than a partial ſlavery. By the form of the civil conſtitution, they are excluded from any ſhare in the adminiſtration of the civil government of the ſtate. By the inſtitution of the patronage laws, they are deprived of all concern in the conduct of eccleſiaſtical affairs; eſpecially, if theſe laws ſhall be confirmed and eſtabliſhed, according to the interpretation they have lately received. What, then, is the ſituation of the common people of Scotland? It is obvious to all the world, that, excepting a mere ſecurity for life, and a capacity of holding property, they are reduced to the exerciſe, only, of the common functions of all animals, the gratification of hunger and thirſt, and other ſimilar enjoyments!

AFTER what has been ſaid, it would be altogether ſuperfluous, perhaps, it would be improper, to enlarge, further, upon the ſpecies of character which muſt, naturally, reſult from ſo unfavourable a ſituation. There are places in the world, in which, to preſerve the governments, this ſhould, always, be the condition of the people. The ſable cultivators of ſugar, in our Weſt India colonies, and the ſlaves of eaſtern deſpotiſms, ſhould never riſe above that level; nor can a change of the inſtitutions of theſe countries, any more than an alteration of

the patronage laws, be wiſhed for, by men who prefer the preſervation of eſtabliſhed ſyſtems, however pernicious, to the general happineſs of mankind, and the diguity and perfection of the human character.

SECT. IV.

Patronage extinguiſhes the Ideas and Impreſſions of Liberty, among the great body of the People.

IF liberty, as is commonly allowed in this, and in every free ſtate, is an object of ineſtimable value, the preſent view of our ſubject merits a moſt peculiar attention from every man, who either loves the conſtitution of his country, or feels himſelf intereſted in the general liberty and happineſs of mankind. We owe it to that quantity of freedom, which has, for a long time, filled the veins of the Britiſh conſtitution, that there is yet, ſcarcely, a man to be found, ſo daring and ſo profligate, as, without colour or diſguiſe, to ſtand forth as the open and avowed friend of deſpotiſm, in oppoſition to the intereſts of liberty. While, therefore, all men admit the ſuperior excellence of the object about which we contend, the method of attaining and preſerving it, certainly, cannot be a matter of indifference, nor can we ever be, ſufficiently, jealous of

of any attempt to deſtroy it, however recommended, or however diſguiſed.

THE propriety and importance of preſerving a deep ſenſe of liberty, upon the minds of the ſubjects of a free government, will be, every where, allowed. Without it, indeed, the preſervation of liberty itſelf, becomes precarious, if not altogether impoſſible. If the fountain is corrupted, the quality of the ſtream cannot be pure. If the impreſſions of liberty are, by any means, worn off, or impaired, upon the minds of the people, the very ſource of liberty is corrupted or exhauſted, and it is impoſſible that the ſtate can be ſafe. Deſpotiſm may erect the ſtandard. The people are, then, prepared to enliſt themſelves; for it is, altogether, in vain to expect the preſervation of liberty, when it becomes, no longer, an object of concern, or attachment to the people, and when they have, ſcarcely, remaining upon their minds, a conception of its excellence. It might be, equally, natural and poſſible, after a diſcharge of the blood, in a human body, to expect the preſervation of animal life. Such being the intimate connection between the preſervation of liberty, and its impreſſions, upon the minds of the people, every inſtitution, whoſe effect it is, to wear off theſe impreſſions, and to inſpire the people with indifference, as to the intereſts of liberty, muſt have a very pernicious tendency to the ſtate, and ought to be examined, with the ſtricteſt and minuteſt attention.

THE queſtion is not, ſhall liberty and the ideas and impreſſions of liberty, be preſerved among the people, or utterly extinguiſhed? Upon this point, it is impoſſible, that there ſhould be a difference of ſentiment, among free men. The only queſtion is, what inſtitutions are beſt adapted to the preſervation of liberty; and what are thoſe, which have an infallible tendency to impair and deſtroy it; in order that the former may be adopted, and that the infamy of the latter, if any ſuch exiſt, may be defaced from the records of our country.

To the moſt inattentive obſerver of manners, it muſt be evident, that man, in every ſituation, is ſo much the creature of habit, that there is, ſcarcely, any external act he can perform, and nothing, at all well, without the habit of performing: nor is there, ſcarcely, any paſſion or affection of the mind, which will make a deep and laſting impreſſion, without a conſtant habit of gratification, or the enjoyment of ſomething, which will keep the object of the paſſion, or affection, always, before our eyes, and in connection with our ſenſes.

IN the military life, accordingly, the moſt conſtant and regular exerciſe is found indiſpenſibly neceſſary, both to acquire, and retain the power of performing, with dexterity, the different manœu-

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vres and evolutions; and, even, to preſerve the very paſſion of diſcipline, which, in the management of an army, is eſſentially requiſite. Examples, equally forcible, might be produced from all the different arts and profeſſions, whether liberal or mechanical; but it is needleſs to dwell upon particulars, which cannot eſcape the obſervation of any perſon. Every one, who looks around, muſt, at once, perceive, that man cannot act, at leaſt, can never act well, without the habit of acting; and that the paſſions and affections of the mind, cannot be retained or preſerved, in a lively and vigorous manner, without the actual enjoyment of the objects, by which they are excited. To a man who has been much in the uſe of frequenting company, ſolitude is intolerable. To one who has been accuſtomed to live in ſolitude, company is exceedingly painful. From a want of the habit of frequenting, he has loſt the paſſion of deſiring, and the power of deriving enjoyment from company.

IN the ſame manner, wherever men are not in the habit of feeling the actual enjoyment of liberty, its impreſſions muſt, ſoon, be impaired, and defaced; the ſenſe of its excellence no longer exiſts; and the people will be left, under the influence of a total indifference, as to the intereſts of liberty, and, with regard to what ſyſtem or principles of government

ſhall prevail, and be eſtabliſhed in their country.

MEN of ſpeculation may, no doubt, acquire a firm and permanent attachment to Liberty, from contemplating her beauties, her virtues, and perfections; from obſerving the dignity of her deportment, the chaſtity of her manners, and the happineſs which ſhe, every where, diſpenſes and communicates, to thoſe around her. Greek and Roman hiſtory and learning, are copious and excellent fountains, from which, men of letters may drink ſtreams of liberty, which will mingle with their characters, form their manners, and direct their paſſions. In the company of Brutus, and the Tribunes; in the auguſt preſence of Cato and Demoſthenes, it is impoſſible not to catch the fire of liberty which flaſhes from them, with ſuch uncommon force and ſplendour, and which muſt, neceſſarily, affect every man who approaches near to it. But the great and uſeful body of the people, whoſe character is of the laſt importance to the ſafety, dignity, and happineſs of the ſtate, cannot drink of theſe ſalutary fountains, nor find acceſs to ſuch illuſtrious company. For the preſervation of liberty, the people have neither reſource nor ſecurity, other than the exerciſe and enjoyment of the right itſelf, in a manner which will, immediately, ſtrike and affect their ſenſes, ſo

as

as to occupy their minds, with deep and permanent impreſſions. Without theſe, it ſeems impoſſible to preſerve, among the great bulk of the people, either the ſenſe, or ſpirit of liberty. We are, here, naturally and inſenſibly, led to a ſtriking and intereſting view of the influence of the laws of patronage, in defacing and deſtroying the ideas and impreſſions of liberty, from the minds of the people.

MORE than once, we have had occaſion to obſerve, and to lament, that, by the form of the civil conſtitution of the country, the great body of the people are, in relation to civil affairs, excluded from the exerciſe and enjoyment of the rights of freedom. The conſequence is, what was, naturally, to have been expected, a total indifference, approaching to inſenſibility, in relation to the value and advantages of political liberty. The people, in no ſhape, poſſeſs any ſhare of the legiſlative power, the moſt exalted and important right, which ſociety can boaſt of, and without the enjoyment of which, by the people, freedom can, ſcarcely, be ſaid to exiſt, in the conſtitution. Hence, the great body of the people, who are deſtitute of the enjoyment of this right, diſcover not that affectionate attachment, nor thoſe lively and exalted ſentiments, in relation to the intereſts of liberty, which ought to pervade, and to animate the citizens of a free government; and, without which, there exiſts nothing, but

but the picture deprived of the life and ſpirit of liberty.

THE effect of this partial diſtribution of freedom, is, in the preſent times, remarkably conſpicuous. It has been ſaid, and believed, with what juſtice, we preſume not to determine, that in refuſing a militia to Scotland, an inſult has been offered, by England, to the national rights of this part of the united kingdom. A diſtinction, has, however, been thereby eſtabliſhed, which the generoſity of Engliſhmen, ought not to have made, and to which, perhaps, the pride and ſpirit of Scotchmen ought not to ſubmit. But this mark of national diſgrace, however evident, and however univerſally allowed, has inſpired the common people of Scotland, with no emotions of reſentment, hardly, of diſguſt. This could not poſſibly have happened, were it not that the people, from a want of the habit of exerciſing, have, almoſt entirely, loſt all ſenſe of political liberty, and together with it, all ſenſe of national dignity and importance.

BUT, in the ſuperior ranks, where the exerciſe of liberty has prevailed, and been felt, a different ſpirit has been diſcovered, and begins to exert itſelf. The contagion may ſpread, and, acting with violence, find its way to the people, in ſpite of their ſituation.

ſituation. The ſpirit of the ſuperior ranks, mean-while, has declared, with a becoming dignity, that they are determined to vindicate the honour of their country, by procuring and eſtabliſhing a reſpectable national defence. They have further avowed their firm intention to repel that invaſion of their political rights, which has been made by thoſe armies of foreigners, which have, for many years, infeſted every part of the country, and have, almoſt, driven out the original and antient inhabitants. But it is peculiarly worthy of remark, that this ſpirit is, as yet, almoſt entirely, confined to thoſe men, who, by holding their lands of the Crown, and enjoying legiſlative powers, have, actually, felt the exerciſe of the rights of freedom, and upon whom, therefore, its impreſſions remain, with ſome appearance of life and vigour.

At the ſame time, it is to be lamented, that this reſpectable and ſuperior claſs of the people, who diſcover ſo much zeal and ſpirit, have, in forming a reſolution to deſtroy fictitious qualifications, and to expel foreign invaders from their territories, manifeſted no inclination to admit their neighbours, the other landholders, to a participation with them of the rights of freedom *: for theſe other landed proprietors,

* Since this was compoſed, we have ſeen copies of two bills to parliament, for the purpoſe of correcting the abuſes in the parliamentary repreſentations of the people; but they afford no ſufficient reaſon

prietors, though many of them do not hold of the Crown, have a deep and ſubſtantial intereſt, and, ſometimes, a more deep and ſubſtantial intereſt than themſelves, in the proſperity of the country. This

reaſon to alter any of the opinions which we have delivered. The one of theſe bills bears to be the production of the committee of the general meeting of the landholders of Scotland. The other, which is the moſt popular of the two, ſeems not to have been at all adopted by the committee, or to have received their approbation; and, ſo far as appears, it is only the opinion of a private gentleman. Both bills agree in one eſſential article, the annihilation of fictitious votes. But they differ much in other particulars; and neither of them is, ſufficiently, liberal.

The bill which has not been produced by the committee, for we know not by what name it is to be diſtinguiſhed, propoſes, indeed, that ſuperiors ſhould be obliged to ſell their ſuperiorities, ſo as the right of voting may be communicated to the real proprietors of land. But, even in this bill, the qualification is kept up at L. 200 of valued rent; which will ſtill exclude many proprietors of L. 100, L. 200, L. 300, and even L. 500 Sterling, and ſometimes more, of real rent; a manifeſt proof how little the framer of that bill has had it in view, to form a liberal, or extenſive ſcale of liberty. Beſides, this bill, even ſuch as it is, we are informed, is generally diſapproved by the great proprietors of land; and the more moderate proprietors, whether holding of the Crown, or of ſubject ſuperiors, have yet teſtified no firm and determined reſolution to vindicate their rights.

The other bill, which appears to have originated from the committee, profeſſes to have in view no other object than the annihilation of the fictitious votes, leaving the repreſentation, in other

This laſt claſs of landholders, however, though numerous, and, from their wealth and education, reſpectable, ſeem not yet to feel the importance of privileges, which they have not been accuſtomed to exerciſe; another ſtriking proof diſcovered, even among the ſuperior and more enlightened ranks, of the juſtice of the doctrine which we have laid down, and endeavoured to maintain: and accordingly, while their neighbours around them, are animated with a juſt ſenſe of their rights, they feel with indifference,

other reſpects, ſubject to the ſame inſufferable inequalities and imperfections, with which it was formerly attended. This bill, breathing the ſpirit, ſeems yet to ride upon the high horſe, of Scottiſh ariſtocracy; and the other bill, as if it were ſtill emulous of a dignity which it pretends to overlook, has mounted a ſteed, only, a little lower. Both bills, taken together, ſeem rather to confirm, than, in any reſpect, to invalidate the doctrine which we have inculcated; for, they ſtrongly and unequivocally, mark the ariſtocratical ſpirit which muſt, indeed, naturally, have reſulted from the ſtate of Scottiſh repreſentation, and from that inconſiderable ſhare of political freedom, which has prevailed, in the government of Scotland.

In ſhort, theſe bills, under the ſpecious appearance of correcting abuſes in the repreſentation of the people, in parliament, are yet more highly ariſtocratical than the public happineſs and ſecurity require, or than is, in any reſpect, conſiſtent with the natural and political rights of the people. The eſſential qualifications of legiſlators, are, 1. Knowledge of the ſubject of legiſlation. 2. Independence of mind. 3. A ſtrong and permanent intereſt in the country

ference, and remain ſilent, indolent, and inactive, as if they had no exiſtence, intereſt, or importance, in the ſtate.

BY theſe, and other animadverſions, here introduced, it is the light of information, and not the virulence of invective, or the aſperity of reproach, we preſume to convey to the people. The evils which have been deſcribed, and which are here mentioned, for

country to be governed, ſo as to form a ſufficient cauſe of attention, as well as attachment, to its welfare. All theſe objects ſeem to be attained by the enjoyment of a property, in land, to the extent of L. 100 Sterling a year of real rent. It muſt be admitted, that this is a very competent independent fortune: Nor can it be doubted, that knowledge, independence of mind, and attachment to the country, are, in general, connected with the nature and independence of that ſituation. Thoſe high qualifications, therefore, which are contained in the bills under conſideration, are produced by no principle of ſound legiſlation, or public liberty, but are the mere creatures of the ſpirit of Scottiſh ariſtocracy.

It muſt be obſerved, too, that in a country ſuch as this, where the legiſlation is performed, not by the people in perſon, but by means of delegates elected by them, it is not neceſſary, that the education or knowledge of the electors ſhould be even ſo high as that of actual legiſlators. It is ſufficient, that they ſhould know, how to chooſe a delegate, and ſhould be independent enough, to be able, to maintain their choice. It is, as we conceive, impoſſible to pretend, that theſe advantages do not, in general, accompany the poſſeſſion of L. 100 a-year of real rent of lands; ſo that, in no view, can we diſcover any reaſonable, or even, a plauſible pretence, for the high qualifications ſpecified in the bills, upon which we have, here, taken the liberty to animadvert.

for the purpoſe of illuſtration, are the neceſſary effects of political cauſes, ariſing from the ſituations in which the different claſſes of the people are placed; and though they may be lamented, they can, ſcarcely, be corrected, in the preſent ſtate of the conſtitution of our country. At the ſame time, it is the indiſpenſible duty of every good citizen, to endeavour to prevent the increaſe of evils which cannot be completely remedied, and to ſtem that torrent of variegated corruption, which has entered every department of the ſtate, and which, if not ſtemmed, will, inevitably, ſap the foundations, and ſweep away the admired ſtructure of the Britiſh conſtitution.

FROM what has been ſaid, it is not, we hope, the effect of arrogance, or preſumption, to conclude, that, with regard to civil affairs, the ideas, and impreſſions of liberty, from a want of the habit of enjoyment, have become extremely faint, if they are not utterly defaced and extinguiſhed, among the great body of the people.

IF ſuch is the effect, which a deprivation of rights, in the civil department of the ſtate, has produced upon the manners, and character of the people, with reſpect to the ſenſe and ſpirit of civil liberty, we have every reaſon to dread the appearance of ſimilar effects, from a ſimilar deprivation of

rights, in relation to our ſpiritual, or eccleſiaſtical concerns; ſo that, if the people are to be ſtripped, at once, of the enjoyment of civil and religious rights, with regard to the adminiſtration of public affairs, the time will ſoon arrive, when there ſhall not remain, upon their minds, a trace of the impreſſions or ſpirit of liberty, either civil or religious.

IT has been ſaid, that the laws of patronage have ſtill reſerved, to the people, the right of objecting to the doctrines and morals of candidates for the miniſtry; a very important power, and which, it has been ſaid, is all that the people, from their capacities and ſituation, ought to enjoy. But this, like every other favour, which the ſpirit of deſpotiſm has ever pretended to beſtow upon the people, is a mere deluſion. Of doctrines, they are affirmed to be altogether unfit and incompetent judges, ſo that their objections, in that reſpect, it will be ſaid, ought never to meet with any degree of ſerious attention. With regard to morals, objections, on that ground, muſt, almoſt, always reſolve into intricate and tedious judicial inveſtigations, which, while they irritate the minds of the people, are, ſeldom, attended with any beneficial conſequence; for, however much, a man's general conduct may merit diſapprobation, it is difficult, if not impoſſible, to bring complete and ſatisfactory evidence of that

degree

degree of immorality, which infers a legal diſqualification. Hence, the power of objecting to doctrine and morals, which is unjuſtly ſaid to be all that the people ought to enjoy, appears to be of little uſe, ſince the objections muſt be eſtabliſhed, by all the evidence, and with all the formality and ſolemnity of judicial diſcuſſion. If, in this, the people have the misfortune to fail, their objections will be treated as wanton, capricious, and unjuſt; and they muſt be compelled, to give implicit ſubmiſſion to the will of the patron, in the appointment of their miniſter; becauſe, however much they deteſt his character and manners, they are not able to bring poſitive and direct evidence of crimes which amount to a legal excluſion, or diſqualification.

LET this doctrine be extended to the ordinary affairs of life, and there is not, in exiſtence, a man who does not perceive its abſurdity. Were a patron to aſſume the power of appointing a wife to every man in a pariſh, this power might be defended upon the ſame grounds, and with as much appearance of juſtice, as that of appointing a miniſter. Should a pariſhioner ſay, that he did not like the woman, or her family, he would be anſwered, that this was altogether the effect of whim and caprice; that it ought not to be liſtened to, and that he would come to love the woman after marriage. Should he

affirm, that he had heard ſomething to the prejudice of her character, he would be aſked, whether he could prove it by the evidence and unequivocal teſtimony of two witneſſes? And if he could not undertake this proof, his objections would be treated as altogether unjuſt, and it behoved him to ſubmit to marry the woman allotted him by the patron, and againſt whom he could offer no *ſolid* or *legal* objection. Should the pariſhioner ſtill inſiſt, that he could not, by any means, be pleaſed with her complexion and manners, he would be told, that he was no judge of theſe particulars; that the patron, who was a man of faſhion and rank, had ſeen the world, and knew all the varieties of the female character, in the different countries of Europe, had approved both of her complexion and manners; ſo that he was particularly honoured, and highly favoured, when his wife was, thus, ſelected for him, by a man of faſhion, ſo much better qualified than himſelf, to judge of her complexion, manners, and perfections; and that, at any rate, he had nothing to do, but to be ſatisfied, that ſhe had the natural qualities of a woman, without diſputing which, his objections ought to be conſidered as entirely whimſical, frivolous, and abſurd.

IT would be ſaid, too, as has been ſaid with regard to patronage, that it would be exceedingly dangerous,

dangerous, and altogether inconſiſtent with the peace and good order of ſociety, to give every man the choice of his own wife; for what! if all the men in a pariſh ſhould happen to be captivated with the love of one woman? From this circumſtance, which might frequently happen, whenever there is a woman of ſuperior beauty and accompliſhments, in a pariſh, diſturbances, tumults, perhaps, more fatal and dangerous exceſſes, would ariſe; eſpecially among the inferior ranks, whoſe paſſions are fierce and ungovernable; it would diſturb the peace of families, and diſſolve the natural bond of union between father and ſon, brother and brother, and other near relations, who might all contend about the ſame woman, and who, therefore, would conceive, the bittereſt animoſities againſt each other; civil diſcord, of every kind, would rage and deſtroy the tranquillity and happineſs of the ſtate. There is, in ſhort, no way of preſerving peace, and good order, among the people, but by giving the patron an unlimited power, in forming their matrimonial connections. To them, no bad conſequence can ariſe from this inſtitution, for the patron can, only, chooſe from among the female ranks; ſo that a man can never, in any event, be diſappointed of a woman; and it is impoſſible to ſuppoſe, that the patron, who is a gentleman of taſte, virtue, and rank, will impoſe upon any man,

a woman of an immoral character, or make an improper choice, in any other reſpect.

THE influence of patronage may, in this manner, be carried ſtill further for the benefit of ſociety. The patron, from his education and rank, is, in reſpect of the generality of people, in a pariſh, a man of ſuperior wiſdom and knowledge. He, therefore, falls, naturally, to take the total command of their affairs; to chooſe their ſervants; to ſettle their domeſtic œconomy; to keep their purſes, leſt they ſhould, improperly, ſpend their money; to direct the education of their children; and to aſſume the entire management of their affairs. It is, greatly, for the benefit of the people to be, thus, under the government of ſuperior wiſdom, knowledge, and diſcernment, in the ſame manner, that it would be more beneficial for them, to be governed, immediately, by the infinite wiſdom of God, than to be left to the direction of their own wills, and liable to be miſled by their ignorance, perverſe inclinations, and uninformed underſtandings.

OTHER evident and important advantages would, likewiſe, reſult from that ſalutary ſyſtem of univerſal patronage, which is here recommended. It would, entirely, relieve the people, of the trouble and perplexity of thinking about their own affairs, which would be

be undertaken and performed by the patron. The people being, in this manner, altogether exempted from the trouble of thinking, and their attention and exertions, entirely, confined to action, in the execution of the patron's orders, a much greater quantity of labour would be performed, which would redound equally to their own emolument, and the public intereſt. In a word, there can be nothing ſo beneficial to ſociety, as this ſyſtem of univerſal patronage, which commits all power of thinking, and all exerciſe of judgment, to one individual, in every diſtrict, leaving only to the multitude, the humble office of execution, with unlimited and implicit ſubmiſſion. It is of no conſequence, that this ſyſtem would introduce, on the one hand, the inſufferable inſolence and oppreſſion of deſpotiſm; and, on the other, the ſervility and corruption of ſlavery; for without theſe, it is impoſſible to produce the proper quantity of labour, or to preſerve peace and good order, in a country. The infinite variety of ſpeculation concerning ſtate affairs, and others, in which, men entitled to judge for themſelves, are apt to indulge, ſeems to be inconſiſtent with *good* and *quiet* government, the mind in that ſituation being, always vigorous, ingenious, and active, and diſpoſed to ſcan every abuſe of power, with too nice an application of judgment.

LET any man reflect, upon the tranquillity and harmony of thoſe ſtates, where the people are deprived of the liberty of thinking, about public affairs, and he will, at once, perceive the aſtoniſhing imperfection of free governments. Under the power of eaſtern ſovereignties, where the art of government is, thoroughly, underſtood, and where, therefore, every thing concurs to render the hand of the prince formidable and irreſiſtible, there is nothing but peace and tranquillity to be ſeen. Here, by a happy contraction, and depreſſion of the powers of the human underſtanding, the liberty of thinking, among the people, is reduced to nothing. The conſequence is a fortunate one. Such a degree of debility has ſeized the minds of the people, that they cannot reaſon about their rights, make any efforts in their defence, nor give any diſturbance to the deſpotiſm. Among them, there is but one opinion, in relation to public affairs, civil and religious. They concur, and have concurred, for ages, almoſt, without a diſſenting voice, in admiring and adoring the divinity of an impoſtor, the power and benignity of the hand of the deſpot, which is frequently employed in cruſhing them in pieces, and the perfections of that ſyſtem of government which has reduced them, almoſt, to a level, with all the beaſts of the field! Such are the natural effects of a deprivation of the liberty of thinking among the people; by means of which, there is

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no ſhape which they may not be made to aſſume, no ſyſtem which they are not qualified to embrace, and no degree of ſubjection, which they are not prepared to ſuffer. This is, in fact, a charm, by virtue of which, the people may be brought to unite in any thing, and, under the ſevereſt laſh of oppreſſion, to preſerve the moſt perfect tranquillity.

IN the ſame manner, one can never, ſufficiently, admire the perfect unity, and quietneſs, which, by depriving the people of the liberty of thinking about public affairs, is found to prevail in the Roman Catholic church, and, in moſt countries which profeſs the Roman Catholic perſuaſion. It is the natural effect of the ſyſtem, that every thing is there conducted with ſerenity. Among them, there is even a delicacy and tranquillity in the different ways of committing crimes, which the coarſe manners of free nations have not been able to acquire. A man may, there, be ſurpriſed, a little, by the ſudden and ſecret ſtab of the ſtiletto; he may feel the convulſions of a poiſon ſecretly adminiſtered; he may perceive the moſt deteſtable violations of nature, in the commiſſion of crimes, which cannot be mentioned: all theſe things are done without diſturbing the neighbourhood; and tranquillity, without liberty or chaſte manners, is one of the fundamental principles of theſe governments. But one can never there ſee ſo

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inſufferable and ſo indecent a ſpectacle, as a tumult of the people, contending about the eſtabliſhment of articles of faith, or the exerciſe of natural and political rights. Upon theſe occaſions, there is, generally, in the actions of men, a rudeneſs and a vehemence, which are altogether inconſiſtent with the peace, ſoftneſs, and refinement of manners, which ought to prevail in *good* governments.

IN ſhort, it is abſolutely neceſſary, that the people ſhould not have the power of thinking, for themſelves, upon almoſt any ſubject, leſt the ſtate ſhould be, continually, diſturbed with tumults and ſeditions. The power of allowing every man to chuſe his own wife, is, evidently, a moſt copious and dangerous ſource of contention and animoſity. That power, therefore, muſt be firſt reſtrained; and when the mind is thus ſubdued, and habituated to a deprivation of right, in that favourite and important article, it will, naturally, and eaſily, ſubmit to the loſs of inferior rights, which will be ſucceeded by the higheſt degree of peace and tranquillity.

THAT ſpecies of reaſoning, by which, the right and exerciſe of eccleſiaſtical patronage have been introduced and ſupported, when extended to the civil and ordinary affairs of life, appears, in this manner, to be ſo utterly inconcluſive, if not altogether abſurd, that

that no man has been hitherto found, at leaſt, in this country, to inculcate or defend it. It is, therefore, a matter of aſtoniſhment and regret, that, without the ſmalleſt appearance of difference in the principle, the ſame ſpecies of reaſoning ſhould have been found ſufficient, among an enlightened and intelligent people, to eſtabliſh and ſupport, for a conſiderable time, a ſyſtem of eccleſiaſtical policy, which totally deprives the people of any effectual or uſeful power in the election of their miniſters, and compels them to ſubmit, implicitly, to the appointment of patrons, without examination, choice, or exercise of judgment.

IT, therefore, appears, that the laws of patronage, have a twofold operation to the detriment of public freedom. By withholding the exerciſe of the rights of paſtoral election, they tend to impair and deface the ſentiments and impreſſions of liberty, both civil and eccleſiaſtical; which has been already enlarged upon, at conſiderable length. By compelling an unlimited ſubmiſſion to the nomination and appointment of patrons, the laws of patronage have an infallible and manifeſt tendency to introduce, in a poſitive manner, the ideas and impreſſions of ſlavery, ſubſtituted to thoſe of liberty, upon the minds of the people. In this manner, the total annihilation of religious freedom, will be ſuperadded to the extinction

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tinction of political liberty, already almoſt entirely loſt among the great body of the people; ſo that, with reſpect to them, a character of complete dejection and depravity muſt, neceſſarily, be formed.

WE are told by an elegant hiſtorian and philoſopher *a*, who ſtands high in the ſcale of merit and eſteem of mankind, that "the implicit ſubmiſſion to "all her decrees, which is exacted by the Roman "church, prepares and breaks the mind for political "ſervitude." The juſtice of the opinion here delivered, muſt be univerſally allowed, for it appears to be collected, with deep attention, from the genuine features of the human character. But it muſt be admitted, at the ſame time, that implicit ſubmiſſion, when required by a Roman pontiff, is not more pernicious, and has not different, or more fatal effects, than when it is exacted by the hand of a patron. In both caſes, it muſt, equally, break and prepare the mind for ſlavery. The poiſon lies not in the hand of a Roman pontiff, who iſſues a bull, or an eccleſiaſtical ordinance, nor in that of a patron, who beſtows a preſentation. It is the habit of implicit ſubmiſſion, without any act of its own will, without examination, and without any exerciſe of judgment, which debaſes and prepares the mind for political ſervitude. From whatever power, therefore,

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fore, whether from the thunder of the Pope, or the hand of a patron, the mind receives the habit of ſubmitting to a foreign impulſe, the effect is the ſame. The mind is, thereby, broke; the ſtamp of liberty is worn off; and, the preparation being thus made, ſlavery muſt be the inevitable conſequence. It is unneceſſary, we hope, to inſiſt further upon this ſubject. To the diſintereſted, and the candid, we truſt, we have ſufficiently demonſtrated, that, in impairing and defacing the ideas and impreſſions of liberty from the minds of the people, in introducing thoſe of ſlavery in their place, and in concurring with the civil inſtitutions of the country, to cauſe a total extinction of the ſenſe and ſpirit of liberty, among the great body of the people; the laws of patronage are, in a free government, unqueſtionably, inconſiſtent with public utility.

BUT having mentioned the name, and founded on the opinion of an elegant and profound hiſtorian, we cannot conclude this view of the ſubject, without lamenting, that his polite manner, his moderation, and abilities, have now, for two years paſt, deſerted the deliberations of the venerable aſſembly of the church of Scotland. To his opinions, upon church politics, indeed, ſince the time that we collected ſufficient confidence to judge for ourſelves, we could never aſſent; but we have often liſtened,

and liſtened with admiration, to his extenſive views, his clear conceptions, and the inimitable force, elegance, and perſpicuity of his language. It was, really, lamentable, to ſee a man of this deſcription, during a courſe of years, ſtanding, only, at the head of an eccleſiaſtical party, levelling the religious, and, of courſe, the civil liberties of the people, and infuſing into the liberal plan of eccleſiaſtical policy eſtabliſhed in Scotland, the execrable ſpirit and principles of Toryiſm, when, from the depth and variety of his political knowledge, and the extent and ſplendour of his abilities, he was qualified to fill, with diſtinguiſhed eminence, the higheſt department in the ſtate. We ſhould be very widely miſunderſtood, if it ſhould be ſuppoſed, that we here impute to the illuſtrious hiſtorian, any the leaſt degree of malignity of deſign. Unable, even, to ſuſpect the learned and venerable father, of a premeditated intention to deſtroy the civil and religious liberties of his country, we, only, mean to affirm, that this is the inevitable conſequence of that illiberal ſyſtem of church policy which he had long eſpouſed, and endeavoured to enforce, with a uniformity and perſeverance, which could, only, be exceeded, by the abilities diſplayed in the execution.

SECT.

SECT. V.

Patronage tends to impair the impreſſions of Religion, and thereby to introduce bad Morals among the People.

THE love of reward, and the fear of puniſhment, it has been ſaid, are the two great engines, by which, the vices of mankind are reſtrained, and ſociety moved, regulated, and conducted. By the antients, an amazing attention was given to the forming the characters of the people, by certain inſtitutions, ſo as, eaſily, naturally, and without the appearance of violence, to make them tread the paths of virtue, and of the public good. To the terror of puniſhments, they often added, the allurements of the moſt engaging, and powerful rewards.

THE ſyſtem of modern legiſlation is, greatly, more ſimple. It promiſes no reward, but mere ſecurity againſt injury; and this, like the ſun, extends, equally, to the vicious and the virtuous. If any man tranſgreſs the laws, ſays a modern legiſlator, without inquiring farther, let him be puniſhed: let him be thrown over the ladder, or ſtretched upon the rack; and there, let him expiate the guilt which he has contracted, and compenſate the injuries which he has committed; without conſidering, that the injury

for which he ſuffers may be irreparable, and that, from the depravity of his character, habituated to vice, he may have committed a thouſand acts of private oppreſſion and injuſtice, which may never have come to light. This would ſeem to evince the ſuperior wiſdom of every ſyſtem, which has, for its object, by certain inſtitutions, to form a virtuous character among the people, and thereby to prevent, rather than to puniſh crimes.

ACCORDING to our civil inſtitutions, except the faint and equivocal approbation, which our manners beſtow upon a virtuous conduct, the fear of puniſhment is the only reſtraint upon vice, and the only inducement to virtue. But the benignity of infinite wiſdom, manifeſted to us in the divine ſyſtem of the revelations, has, in a great meaſure, ſupplied the imperfections of our civil inſtitutions. This divine ſyſtem is filled with moral precepts, and examples of the moſt perfect beauty, and the moſt extenſive utility. It has denounced, againſt the vicious, the moſt dreadful puniſhments, which torments, infinite in duration, and inconceivable in degree, can inflict. It has promiſed, to the virtuous, a future exiſtence of eternal felicity, in the immediate preſence, and under the immediate government of infinite goodneſs and omnipotence. In a word, this is the only ſyſtem we know, which, by the combined influence,

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of moral precepts, and examples, fear of puniſhment, and hope of the moſt perfect reward, has, for its profeſſed object, to correct every ſpecies of immorality, to inſpire the mind with the higheſt degree of integrity, benevolence, and humanity, and, thereby, to form a virtuous character among the people.

IT is, therefore, ſufficiently evident, without the neceſſity of farther illuſtration, how very important it is, that the impreſſions and influence of this ſyſtem ſhould be univerſal, deep, and permanent. All means ſhould conſpire to make it an object of the moſt perfect veneration, and of the firmeſt attachment to the people. The ſyſtem itſelf, as has been ſaid, contains and recommends the moſt uſeful precepts of morality, and denounces the moſt awful puniſhments. But the performance of the duties of morality is attended with, at leaſt, an appearance of labour, and is, therefore, naturally, rather, an object of averſion; accordingly, we find, among the people, a ſtrong propenſity to reſt their hope and ſalvation upon the infinite goodneſs and mercy of God, rather than, upon the rectitude or perfection of their moral conduct. The idea of exquiſite and everlaſting pain, is, ſtill more, an object of natural abhorrence; ſo that theſe two particulars, in themſelves, tend rather to avert from, than procure to the ſyſtem, the veneration, and affections of mankind.

THE chief, and, except the goodneſs of the Deity, the only particular, in this ſyſtem, which carries an engaging appearance, is apt to ſeize the imaginations, and conciliate the affections of mankind, is the promiſe and hope of the ineſtimable reward of eternal felicity. But the attainment of this reward, however certain, in contemplation, is remote and diſtant. The proſpect begins, properly, to open, only, beyond the grave; and, therefore, its preſent effects cannot be very forcible or lively. It communicates no ſhare, or no conſiderable ſhare, of preſent enjoyment; and, therefore, ſuch is the conſtitution of human nature, it can, ſcarcely, form an object of very ſtrong preſent attachment. If we would, effectually, conciliate the affections of men, to our religious ſyſtem, or, indeed, to any ſyſtem, we muſt endeavour to accompliſh it, not only by arguments deduced from the divinity or intrinſic excellence of the ſyſtem recommended; we muſt likewiſe enforce our deſign, by means of objects which, immediately, affect their ſenſes, and ſeize their paſſions. We muſt communicate to them a deep intereſt in the ſyſtem to which their attachment is to be ſecured, by conferring on them, the exerciſe of rights obvious to their ſenſes, marked with importance, and, ſtrictly, connected with that ſyſtem. Without theſe particulars, we know not, upon what principle in human nature, it is to be expected, that

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men ſhould conceive a predilection for any particular ſyſtem, or, that it ſhould become the peculiar object of their attachment and veneration.

THE application of theſe principles to the patronage laws, is too obvious, to require illuſtration. By theſe laws, as they are now interpreted, the people are left without any ſhare in the conduct, or adminiſtration of our religious ſyſtem; which, if we are right in the principles we have laid down, muſt be attended with the moſt pernicious conſequences. They are, indeed, permitted to indulge themſelves, in ſpeculations concerning the nature and perfections of the Deity; in contemplating the beauties and enjoyments of Paradiſe, and the new Jeruſalem; and in alternately adoring and diſputing about the inconceivable myſteries of the redemption. Theſe, and particulars ſuch as theſe, compoſe the whole of the boaſted privileges, which paſs under the popular and pompous denomination of, liberty of conſcience. Beyond the line of ſuch exalted, and ſpiritual contemplations, the people are not allowed the exerciſe or enjoyment of any right, connected with the religious ſyſtem of their country.

IF no injury to civil, or eccleſiaſtical liberty was intended, it muſt have been the effect of a very ſingular deduction of reaſoning, to exclude the people from the exerciſe of the plain, and obvious right of

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paſtoral election, and to confer upon them, the moſt unlimited powers, in relation to ſubjects, of the moſt profound, and exalted nature, which they were ſo little qualified to underſtand, and which the human capacity, even, in the moſt enlightened condition, is unfit to comprehend. The influence which this muſt have upon their character, and manners, has been already explained. It has an infallible tendency to produce, and to propogate that ſpirit of enthuſiaſm, which is ſo much condemned, and deteſted by the friends of patronage, and which, it muſt be allowed, degrades the dignity of the human mind, and is often attended with pernicious conſequences to ſociety. But, it ought never to be forgotten, that this deteſtable ſpirit, is, as already ſhown, both excited, and cheriſhed, by the eſtabliſhment of the patronage laws. It is our preſent purpoſe, however, only, to point out the evil conſequences of theſe laws, ſo far, as by denying the people the right of electing their own miniſters, they are calculated to impair, and deface the impreſſions of religion, from their minds.

DEPRIVED in this manner, of the right of paſtoral election, a natural and important power, eſſentially connected with the religious ſyſtem, the people are deſtitute of one motive, and indeed, one of the moſt obvious, and forcible motives of attachment, to the

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ſyſtem itſelf. Without the enjoyment of this natural, and important right, it is impoſſible that the people ſhould feel themſelves ſo deeply intereſted in, or ſo zealouſly attached to the religious eſtabliſhment, as they otherwiſe would have been; eſpecially when, added to all this, they ſhall perceive, that religion is made a ſubject of ſolemn mockery, by conferring eccleſiaſtical benefices upon men, who, if they are allowed to reap the emoluments, teſtify the utmoſt indifference, as to the approbation, or happineſs of the people; and who, at the ſame time, ſcruple not to atteſt, in the preſence of Almighty God, that they have accepted their benefices, in order to promote the intereſts of religion, and virtue, among the people. It is not, here, intended to wound the feelings, or attack the morality of any man. We are willing to believe that, impelled by neceſſity, or miſled by education, thoſe gentlemen, who think themſelves at liberty, to act in that manner, have not deliberately conſidered the nature of the offence, of which they are guilty, nor the extent of the evils which reſult from it. But however that may ſtand, it cannot be diſputed, that, in popular opinion, their conduct muſt be ever expoſed to the reproach, and productive of the conſequences which have been deſcribed; for the minds and affections of the people, muſt, naturally, be alienated from a ſyſtem, in the adminiſtration of which, they feel themſelves

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poſſeſſed of no deep or material intereſt, and in which, abuſes ſo very groſs, are tolerated without correction, and even confirmed, by ſolemn judicial determinations of the ſupreme eccleſiaſtical court.

IT is, therefore, very difficult to diſpute the pernicious conſequences of the patronage laws, which have reduced the people to that ſituation, inſpired them with theſe ſentiments, and exhibited ſo contemptible a view of a ſyſtem, which, both in reſpect of its extenſive utility, and divine authority, ought to be the conſtant object of veneration. It is indeed impoſſible any longer to palliate, or diſguiſe the fatal effects of the patronage laws, or their pernicious influence upon the religious conduct, and opinions of the people. Stripped of the natural right of paſtoral election, without any ſenſible intereſt in the adminiſtration of religion, impreſſed with a deep abhorence of the abuſes, which, it tolerates, in the appointment of miniſters, their ardent, and animated attachment to the ſyſtem itſelf, will cool and decay; the impreſſion of its excellence, will grow faint, and gradually wear off. The precepts of morality, which it dictates, the puniſhments which it denounces, and the rewards which it promiſes, will begin to have little force. The whole ſyſtem, will ceaſe to be an object of veneration, and a total indifference about religion,

religion, and an extenſive corruption of morals, muſt neceſſarily enſue.

OF theſe evils, flagrant and alarming ſymtoms, have already begun to appear. The great body of the clergy themſelves, and devout and ſerious perſons, loudly complain, that the morals of the people are, greatly, relaxed; that a total indifference to the inſtitutions of religion, approaching to contempt, begins to prevail, and that numerous and powerful ſeceſſions, driven from the Preſbyterian communion, have, almoſt every where, thinned, and, often, totally deſolated the eſtabliſhed churches of the Preſbyterian perſuaſion. Theſe particulars may alarm the fears, but cannot excite the aſtoniſhment of any one, who candidly, and deliberately, conſiders the nature, and tendency, of the patronage laws, taken in conjunction with other circumſtances, which have mingled with the manners, and inſtitutions of our country.

SECT.

SECT. VI.

Patronage tends to introduce Simony among the Clergy; which muſt likewiſe hurt the Morals of the People.

TO complete the meaſure of averſion and indifference, with regard to our religious ſyſtem, the deteſtable vice of ſimony will, naturally, accompany the entire eſtabliſhment of the right of preſentation. This propoſition appears to be certain, whether we appeal, for evidence, to undoubted facts furniſhed by experience, or to reaſonings deduced from the principles of human nature. The love of gain, ſince the eſtabliſhment of private property, has been every where violent, and in commercial ages and countries, almoſt, irreſiſtible; it is, therefore, the natural effect of this violent paſſion, that eccleſiaſtical preferments ſhall be expoſed to open ſale, whenever the unlimited uſe of preſentations is, thoroughly recognized, and when it is underſtood that the people have no longer any right to interfere, or to call the infamous tranſaction in queſtion. Simony is, indeed, the neceſſary conſequence of the principles by which the right of patronage is pretended to be ſupported. It is ſaid to be a right of private property; and ſhall a man be reſtrained from making the moſt beneficial uſe of his property? Is there any

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one who does not perceive that this ſpecies of reaſoning, when aided by avarice, and liable to no control from the people, will be held as concluſive, and will, infallibly, eſtabliſh the pernicious and deteſtable commerce of ſimony?

SUCH is the natural and neceſſary conſequence of the introduction of the right of preſentation. Such are the effects which have always accompanied it, in every age, and in every country, in which, it was firmly eſtabliſhed. One cannot peruſe a page of church hiſtory without perceiving, from the unequivocal teſtimony of fatal experience, the truth and juſtice of theſe obſervations. To enumerate the authorities, or quote the evidence of what is here affirmed, would be an abuſe of time, and an improper incroachment upon the patience of the reader. If any man entertain any doubt concerning it, let him converſe with Moſheim * and

* Cen. 10. Part II. His words are, Simony "reigned with "impudence and licentiouſneſs. The election of biſhops and "abbots was no longer made according to the laws of the church; "but kings and princes, or their miniſters and favourites, either "conferred theſe eccleſiaſtical dignities upon their friends and crea"tures, or ſold them, without ſhame, to the higheſt bidder. "Hence it happened, that the moſt ſtupid and flagitious wretches "were frequently advanced to the moſt important ſtations in the "church, and that, upon ſeveral occaſions, even ſoldiers, civil "magiſtrates,

Du Pin †; let him trace the hiſtory of thoſe ages and countries in which patronage was received, and firmly eſtabliſhed, and he will be convinced, if conviction be the reſult of invincible evidence, that ſimony and preſentation have been, almoſt always, the conſtant concomitants of each other, in every other country, and in every former period of time.

IF, therefore, the right of preſentation ſhould be, completely, eſtabliſhed, in a manner, totally independent of the people, which is the object of the plan of church policy now adopted and purſued, with an unremitting attention, it would be the effect of a ſingular ſpecies of vanity to hope, that the na-

" magiſtrates, counts, and ſuch like perſons, were, by a ſtrange " metamorphoſis, converted into biſhops and abbots."

† Du Pin in his large Eccleſ. Hiſt. cent. 16. informs, that Pope Paul III. " deſiring to begin a reformation at the court of " Rome, ordered ſome cardinals and biſhops to draw up a memorial " of the chief abuſes, that ought to be reformed." The report made by theſe biſhops and cardinals, which is called an admonition, mentions, among other cauſes of the abuſes complained of, " that there have been ſeveral doctors who have taught, that " the Pope is maſter of all benefices, from whence it follows, that " as owner, having a right to ſell what belongs to him, the Pope " cannot be guilty of ſimony." It further affirms, " that in " preſentations to benefices, more regard was had to provide for " the perſons to whom they were given, than to the flock of " Jeſus Chriſt, and the church."

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tives of Scotland, ſhould be able to reſiſt the influence of temptations and corruptions which are, naturally, inherent in the ſyſtem of patronage and preſentation and which have, accordingly, affected all the reſt of the world, wherever that ſyſtem prevailed, and obtained a firm and unqueſtionable footing. It has been ſaid, that the church livings of Scotland being inſignificant in value, would not be worth the purchaſing. But the effect of this obſervation is only to demonſtrate, in the cleareſt manner, that the prevalence of ſimony would be more pernicious in Scotland than in any other country; for the eccleſiaſtical livings being inconſiderable, would, naturally, be purchaſed by perſons of the loweſt, or nearly, of the loweſt rank, in reſpect of fortune, learning, and abilities.

SHOULD, therefore, the period ever arrive, when the voice of patronage and preſentation ſhall, ultimately, prevail, ſuppreſs the rights, and ſilence the complaints of the people, in a deciſive and effectual manner, it cannot, reaſonably, be doubted that the infamous commerce of ſimony will be the infallible conſequence. This is an additional and very alarming evil, with which the laws of patronage are, naturally, attended, and which will concur, in a forcible and ſtriking manner, with the other circumſtances which have been mentioned, to impair

the impreſſions of religion, to alienate the minds and affections of the people from that divine ſyſtem, to expoſe it even to contempt, and to produce a total corruption and diſſolution of manners, ſo far as a purity of manners is connected with a purity and ſtrictneſs of religious opinions, or the reſpect and veneration, with which the religious ſyſtem itſelf is beheld, by the generality of the people.

WE have thus examined the patronage laws, in relation to their pernicious influence on the public utility, in a variety of different views: with what ſucceſs or propriety, muſt be left to the judgment of the public.

SECT. VII.

General idea of Popular Elections and Settlements by Preſentation, ſo far as the former are ſaid to be pernicious, and the latter beneficial to the public Intereſt.

THERE are, however, ſome other views, in which, a popular election of miniſters has been ſaid to be prejudicial, and the nomination of patrons, beneficial to the public; and as we have made the public utility, the chief foundation of our reaſoning, in, almoſt, every part of the inquiry, it it ſeems indiſpenſably neceſſary, that thoſe other views in which a popular election is contended to be adverſe,

adverſe, and the nomination of patrons conducive to the public intereſt, ſhould be conſidered, with the utmoſt degree of candour and attention.

IN the following views, a popular election has been thought, by many whoſe opinions merit the higheſt reſpect, to be extremely hurtful to the public intereſt, and the nomination of patrons, highly, beneficial. 1. By a popular election, the intereſt of learning would be, materially, injured. 2. The patron being himſelf a man of letters and taſte, would, always, make literature and abilities the firſt objects of his attention, in the appointment of a miniſter; nor is it in his power to do any material injury to the intereſts of religion, ſince he can only chooſe from among thoſe perſons who are licenced and found qualified by the church. 3. The people, from their ignorance and incapacity, are unfit judges of the clerical talents and qualifications of a miniſter; and, therefore, it would be highly improper, that the right of election ſhould be committed to them. 4. By the introduction of popular elections, the polite in manners and accompliſhments would be, entirely, loſt among the clergy, who, being in that caſe, obliged to ſolicit the favour of the people, would find it neceſſary, not only to flatter their prejudices, but to adopt their ideas, and imitate their manners. 5. A popular election would be attended with danger-

ous tumults and animoſities, which would deſtroy the peace of private families, and diſturb the tranquillity of the ſtate. Theſe views, ſhall be examined, ſeparately, in the following ſections.

SECT. VIII.

How far Popular Elections are injurious to the Intereſt of Literature.

THE firſt of theſe views, in which a popular election is ſaid to be prejudicial, reſpects the intereſt of learning: a very common topic of declamation, among the friends of patronage, and always urged with confidence, as affording a deciſive argument againſt the propriety of a popular nomination of miniſters. But we cannot avoid remarking, that this point has been taken for granted, rather than demonſtrated, in all the private converſations and public debates, which we have, ever, had occaſion to hear upon the ſubject.

THE encouragement of learning, is an object which muſt command the attention of every man, who feels any concern for the proſperity, dignity, and happineſs of his country; and muſt incline him, to a very nice examination of every inſtitution which carries, even, the appearance of being prejudicial to that favourite

favouraite and important object. The intereſt of learning is an object of more peculiar attention to the clergy of the church of Scotland, who, for very obvious reaſons, derive, in a great meaſure, their reſpect, utility, and importance, from the purity of their manners, and the extent of their learning and abilities. If, therefore, the introduction of popular elections, were to be attended with a material injury to the intereſts of literature, he could, ſcarcely, merit the appellation of a lover of his country, who ſhould deſire to ſee popular elections riſe upon the ruins of the patronage laws, which have been repreſented as extremely favourable to literature. No man could feel himſelf juſtified, in wiſhing for the accompliſhment of ſuch an event, unleſs he could derive conſolation from the reflection, that in preſerving the ſeeds of liberty, the paſſion and ſpirit of learning can never be, entirely, loſt. This, naturally, leads us to a candid examination of thoſe circumſtances, upon which, the intereſt of learning ſeems to depend, ſo as, if poſſible, to enable us to form an impartial judgment upon a ſubject, in which, the paſſions and underſtandings of men, appear to be, ſo deeply, engaged.

THE intereſt of learning, abſtracting from the original powers of genius, which, without being derived either from the patron or the people, may be allowed

allowed to be the gift of nature, ſeems to depend upon one, or other, or a combination of the following particulars. 1. The love of fame and diſtinction. 2. The love of gain. 3. The love of the public, or of mankind. 4. The pleaſure of knowledge, as a ſource of enjoyment, without relation to the public utility; and, 5. The means of gratifying theſe uſeful, and, as to ſome of them, very exalted paſſions. In reaſoning upon the preſent ſubject, from theſe different circumſtances, we muſt take it for granted, agreeably to the fact, that, the ſame number of eccleſiaſtical benefices, will always remain in the church of Scotland, whether the benefices ſhall be filled, by the nomination of patrons, or by popular elections.

Love of fame.

1. THE firſt particular, in the enumeration of circumſtances which relate to the intereſt of learning, is the love of fame. What connection has this exalted paſſion, either in its cauſe or effect, with the nomination of a patron, more than a popular election? If any man feel himſelf actuated by the impulſe of that generous paſſion, he cannot fail to perceive, that the public opinion is the only proper, and adequate ſource of gratification. The opinion of a patron, or any private gentleman, however reſpectable, is by far too inſignificant, to ſatisfy a paſſion, the object of which, is ſo elevated and extended. If there

there ſhould be a man, whoſe love of fame, meaſured by his genius, ſhould be ſo extremely contracted, as to be capable of being gratified by the approbation of an individual patron, we may, ſafely, venture to affirm, that the want of ſuch a character, could never be felt as a material loſs, or any loſs to the republic of letters. But to ſay, that the love of fame, can, in any caſe, be produced or ſatisfied, by the approbation of an individual, is, in reality an abuſe of language. The approbation of the public, is the only object which can either excite, or gratify a genuine and uſeful paſſion for fame; which ſeems to decide the queſtion in favour of a popular election, ſo far, as the love of fame is ſuppoſed to influence the intereſt of learning.

IF the gratitude of a clergyman, for his living, be due, only, to an individual, that individual will, naturally, become the firſt object of his attachment and veneration; which muſt, greatly, limit the direction and operation of his paſſions; whereas, if he owed his election to the favour and approbation of the people, they would become, equally, or nearly, in an equal degree, the objects of his affections. The idea of an individual being thus loſt, in the affections of a clergyman, his paſſions would be, thereby, enlarged. A favour due to a multitude, though comparatively, inconſiderable,

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carries a reſemblance to that which is due to the public; and, from courting the good opinion and eſteem of a pariſh, to covet the approbation of the public, at large, would ſeem to be a natural, and, almoſt, a neceſſary extenſion of his ideas and his paſſions. In this manner, it appears, that if the intereſt of learning, be at all connected with patronage, or popular elections, it has a more intimate relation to the latter, as being beſt calculated both to excite, and to gratify the paſſion for fame, or public approbation; one obvious particular, upon which, the intereſt of learning muſt be allowed to depend. From this, it follows, as a plain and natural conſequence, that popular elections, far from being hurtful, are rather beneficial to the intereſt of literature, ſo far as this uſeful and elegant acquirement, is promoted by the love of fame, and the eminent diſtinction, naturally, connected with the gratification of that elevated paſſion.

WITH regard to the diſtinction ariſing from the acquiſition and enjoyment of artificial honours, which are likewiſe objects of ambition, the Sovereign is the fountain from which, alone, it can proceed. It muſt be admitted, that this kind of diſtinction, according to our ideas, and manners, is, in many reſpects, eligible and uſeful; but being, generally, conferred by the Sovereign, as the reward

ward of illuſtrous merit, or important public ſervices, it ſeems to be, alike, unconnected with patronage and popular elections.

2. As to the love of gain, little can be ſaid. Were popular elections calculated to extinguiſh this paſſion, as an inducement to the acquiſition of literary merit, we know not, whether it could be reckoned a material injury to literature. It may be doubted, how far it is for the intereſt of ſociety, that men of genius, eſpecially in philoſophy and politics, ſhould be induced to proſtitute their talents, from the gratification of ungenerous paſſions. But the ſprings of human action, even when directed to the ſame beneficent object, being ſo very different, in different perſons, we ſhould not wiſh, by limiting the motives to the proſecution of literary ſtudies, to run the hazard of cutting off one, even, a mercenary genius, from the republic of letters. Allowing, therefore, that the love of gain may, ſometimes, produce a learned and elegant compoſition, a profound diſcovery, or an ingenious invention, we proceed to inquire, whether, and in what manner, a popular election of miniſters, is injurious to the exiſtence or gratification of this paſſion. Love of gain.

A MAN of genius, it would ſeem, can gratify the love of gain, only, in two ways: 1. By a ſale of his works, 2. By civil or eccleſiaſtical preferments,

ments, for which learning is a recommendation, or a neceſſary accompliſhment. In what manner a popular election ſhould be hurtful, and the nomination of a patron beneficial, to either of theſe views, we are altogether unable to comprehend. If the former be the object of a man of genius, it is attainable, only, by the favour and opinion of the people, and not by thoſe of any individual patron. If the latter, a patron has no civil preferments to grant *; and as to the eccleſiaſtical benefices in Scotland, they remain the ſame, in number and value, whether they are beſtowed by patrons, or by the people. So far, therefore, as the intereſt of literature depends upon the love of gain, it appears to be a matter of no moment, whether patronage, or popular elections, ſhould prevail, in the ſettlement of miniſters. If there be any difference, it ſeems to lie in favour of popular elections, ſince there are often in a pariſh, men more opulent than the patron; and ſince, at any rate, it is certain, that the whole pariſh, taken together, is almoſt always more opulent and powerful than the patron; and, on that account, better enabled to gratify a man of genius,

* The Crown is no doubt patron of many churches, but experience has ſufficiently demonſtrated, that Scottiſh clergymen, are not the objects of the civil preferments of the Crown; nor, indeed, can they be, from the nature of our civil conſtitution and religious eſtabliſhment.

genius, whether money, or preferment, be the object of his ambition.

3. THE love of the public! This, it will be admitted, is, at once, the moſt uſeful, and the moſt elevated paſſion, that can inſpire or actuate the conduct of human action. Should it be found, upon inquiry, that popular elections have, in their nature or effects, a tendency to ſuppreſs the exertions of ſo liberal and beneficent a paſſion, we ſhould begin, greatly, to doubt, whether the ſyſtem we had adopted were not, entirely, erroneous. The public utility being made the chief foundation of our argument, we ſhould behold, with regret, the introduction of a ſyſtem calculated to prevent the exiſtence, or weaken the influence of public paſſions, which, ſo far as the welfare of the ſtate is derived from the wiſdom and benevolence of human conduct, are the very ſources of public happineſs, and of public liberty. Such a ſyſtem would be more the object of diſapprobation in a country, whoſe manners favouring, in every particular, the indulgence of the private paſſions, in oppoſition, perhaps, to the ſpirit of the government, have eſtabliſhed few or no inſtitutions, tending either to produce, or to cheriſh the public affections. Love of the public.

UPON a review of the ſubject, therefore, we are happy to diſcover, that, inſtead of being impaired,

the force of the doctrine we have maintained, has been rather illuſtrated and confirmed, by conſidering the effects which popular elections muſt, naturally, have upon the manners and ſentiments of the clergy, as well as the people. From what has been already ſaid, in treating of the love of fame as a ſource of learning, the reader will have obſerved, that patronage tends to fix the reſpect, benevolence, and entire affections of every clergyman, in a great meaſure, upon one individual; than which, nothing can be more, evidently, hoſtile to the exiſtence and influence of public paſſions.

POPULAR elections, on the other hand, while they animate the electors with a proper ſenſe of liberty, are calculated, by making the people the objects of reſpect and attachment, to enlarge the ideas and affections of the clergy; to inſpire them with a more extended benevolence; and, thereby to excite a paſſion which, if not public, carries, at leaſt, a very ſtrong appearance, and partakes much of the nature, of a public paſſion. A pariſh is but an inconſiderable public, and he who has experienced its favours and approbation, will find himſelf, naturally, diſpoſed to make it the object, equally, of his attention and benevolence. Here, by means of popular elections, the idea of a public, though of ſmall extent, becomes

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the peculiar object of a clergyman's affections. From a ſmall to a large public, the tranſition is eaſy, and no leſs natural; and, thus, the public paſſions are the natural, they may, almoſt, be called the neceſſary offſpring of popular elections. The intereſt of learning, therefore, if it depend, in any degree, on a love of the public, which cannot juſtly be doubted, is not hurt, but rather, eminently, promoted by means of popular elections, which have ſo manifeſt and ſo forcible a tendency, both to excite and ſupport that liberal and exalted paſſion.

Pleaſure of knowledge.

4. THE fourth particular, in the enumeration of circumſtances, upon which the intereſt of learning depends, is the pleaſure of knowledge, as a ſource of enjoyment, without relation to the public utility. This elegant paſſion has been known to have had, at all times, conſiderable influence in promoting the intereſt of learning. But it muſt be evident, that it depends upon circumſtances altogether unconnected with patronage, and popular elections. The love of knowledge, like the powers of genius, may be allowed to be original; although, doubtleſs, both of them may be conſiderably weakened, or enlivened, by the influence of accidental circumſtances. In the effects of popular elections, and preſentations, we diſcover not any circumſtance which has any material operation in either of theſe

reſpects; at leaſt, we find not, that either of the two, poſſeſſes any mark of diſtinguiſhed advantage, over the other, in relation to theſe particulars.

To pleaſe the patron, a clergyman muſt cultivate, a little, the graces of polite converſation, and polite literature: he muſt be acquainted with Pope, Addiſon, Swift, Shakeſpeare, Milton, and, beſides other writers, with the elegant and profound hiſtorians of our own country. He muſt read the newſpapers, and the publications of the day. This will, perhaps, produce a conſiderable degree of attention to the Belles Lettres. It is not, however, on account of the patron alone, that theſe qualifications muſt be acquired. Other gentlemen, of equal taſte and abilities, almoſt, always, reſide in the pariſh where the patron has often no reſidence; ſo that the elegant accompliſhments here mentioned, cannot be, entirely, aſcribed to the effects of patronage and preſentations, without which, the ſame accompliſhments might exiſt, in the ſame degree of perfection.

To pleaſe the people, on the other hand, a clergyman muſt command their reſpect by his extenſive knowledge of the Scriptures, and ſeize their paſſions by the irreſiſtible force of his eloquence. Popular elections, in this manner, give riſe to the ſtudy and cultivation of one of the nobleſt of the fine arts.

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IT, therefore, appears, that popular elections, and preſentations, have each their advantages, but they ſeem to be nearly balanced. The different circumſtances which have been mentioned, render the acquiſition of knowledge in eloquence and Belles Letters, highly eligible; and may, on that account, produce a degree of application, and attention to theſe ſtudies. The habit of acquiring, will, no doubt, naturally, beget a love of knowledge, as a ſource of enjoyment, independent of all other conſiderations. But, we obſerve not, that patronage or popular elections have any conſpicuous influence in promoting the acquiſition of knowledge, as a ſource of pleaſure, which is not, in ſome degree, common to almoſt all the other ſituations in life; eſpecially where politeneſs, eloquence, and learning, are conſidered as ornamental or neceſſary accompliſhments.

Means of gratification.

5. THE laſt particular relates to the means of gratifying the paſſions, by which the intereſt of learning is promoted. The love of fame, it has been ſhown, is gratified by the public approbation; the love of gain, by a ſale of the fruits of genius, or by civil and eccleſiaſtical preferments; the public affections, by contributing to the public proſperity. All theſe things, as being naturally interwoven with the preceding particulars, have been already treated of. It remains only to ſpeak of the means

of ſubſiſtence, independent of labour, or any particular profeſſion or occupation, ſo as to enable perſons of genius to proſecute literary ſtudies.

WITH regard to this, it is univerſally known, that the greateſt part of the clergy of Scotland, receive their education, and alſo their ſubſiſtence, for a conſiderable time, in the character of tutors to the children of men of fortune; and that the eccleſiaſtical livings of Scotland, are not to be diminiſhed, in number or value, by the introduction of popular elections. Such being the caſe, it is evident, that popular elections cannot affect, in the ſmalleſt degree, the means of ſubſiſtence by which miniſters, and perſons intended for the miniſtry, are enabled to follow their literary purſuits. After the eſtabliſhment of popular elections, as well as before, will the ſame number of young men be educated, for the church, in the ſame manner, and the ſame number of eccleſiaſtical benefices will be ready to receive them when educated, and properly qualified. So that, in this laſt particular, any more than in the preceding ones, we cannot diſcover that popular elections are injurious to the intereſt of literature.

IN this manner, we have examined the different circumſtances upon which we conceived the intereſt of learning to depend. From the reſult of the examination,

mination, it appears, we truſt, with ſufficient clearneſs, that popular elections, far from being injurious, are rather favourable to thoſe different particulars, which ſeem to compoſe the intereſt of learning.

WE profeſs not to have that degree of knowledge of the ſtate of literature among the Scottiſh clergy, which would enable us, by facts and examples, to ſupport the opinion which we have adopted; nor are we certain, that an inveſtigation of this ſubject, could furniſh us with any conſiderable number of ſuch facts and examples. Popular elections, we believe, never obtained that degree of ſtability, or length of duration, which would be requiſite to form the clerical character, upon a popular model, and to diſplay, in colours ſufficiently ſtrong and lively, thoſe effects, which they would naturally produce upon the manners and literature of the clergy. But, without entering into any inquiry of that kind, there is reaſon to hope, that principles, ſuch as have been laid down, deduced from the natural operation of human paſſions, would be confirmed and illuſtrated by experience, ſhould the nation be fortunate enough to acquire a ſufficient experience of a popular election of the clergy of the church of Scotland.

SECT. IX.

How far Patronage is beneficial, from the Circumstance of the Patron being himself a man of Taste and Education, and being limited in his choice to Persons licenced by the Church.

IN this view, it is held out by the friends of patronage, not without marks of triumph, that the nomination of a patron must be extremely beneficial to the public, because the patron himself, being a man of taste and education, will always make learning and abilities the peculiar objects of his attention, in the appointment of a minister. It is added, that at any rate, the people can sustain little or no prejudice from his nomination, since he can only choose from among those whom the learned fathers of the church have declared to be sufficiently qualified.

THE beneficent intentions of patrons towards the church, and their country, when their interest seconds their inclinations, we are not disposed to dispute. This species of disinterestedness is general; and to say, that patrons possess not that degree of virtue which is common to all men, would be an aspersion, the illiberality of which, could not be justified. But the obligation of truth being indis-

pensable;

penſable, we muſt obſerve, that public paſſion, though it is not utterly extinguiſhed, is by no means the predominant virtue of the preſent times.

Is a province to be ſupplied with a governor, and who is the man that expects to be promoted to the office? It is not he who is diſtinguiſhed by his moderation, his integrity, and love of the public. It is not he who has applied the whole force of his mind, in acquiring a knowledge of the art of government, and of the different ſcources of public proſperity, and public happineſs. It is the man who, by a ſuperior refinement in the arts of ſolicitation, or by poſſeſſing a weight of parliamentary influence, has obtained the favour of the miniſter of the day. Is a judge to be appointed in any of our ſupreme, or ſubordinate courts of juſtice, and do we inquire who is the firſt, or even, the ſecond man at the bar? Is that the rule by which we are enabled to diſcover the perſon who is to ſupply the place? If this ever happens, it is only in thoſe inſtances, for ſuch we admit there are, in which talents for buſineſs concur with miniſterial influence, in recommending a man to office. Is a member of parliament to be elected? An extenſive knowledge of the difficult and important ſcience of legiſlation, incorruptible integrity, public ſpirit, are not the virtues which are, anxiouſly, looked for by the electors; theſe virtues, like poetic

fire,

ſire, being ſuppoſed, it would ſeem, to be natural qualities of birth.

WE mean to pay a compliment to the humanity of electors, when we ſay, that they ſometimes have the merit of ſelecting gentlemen well connected, and of moderate fortunes, in order that they may be provided for; and to their prudence, when we affirm, that they, more frequently, chooſe the perſon who, in their opinion, is moſt fit to promote their private and particular intereſts. It would, however, be invidious not to mention, that private friendſhips and blood connections are, on ſome occaſions, the means of ſending a gentleman to parliament; and if, in forming the public and important inſtitution of the legiſlature, it were ever allowable to ſet private conſiderations of any kind, in oppoſition to the public good, we ſhould be ready to admit, that elections proceeding from the effects of natural connection, private friendſhip, and agreeable manners, might carry the appearance of ſomething amiable and reſpectable. But when we are inquiring into the ſtate of public virtue, elections of this kind, afford proofs no leſs pregnant of a want of public paſſion, than thoſe which originate from the moſt palpable intereſted conſiderations.

SUCH are the motives, and ſuch the qualifications, which lead to the appointment of judges, legiſlators,

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and other public ſervants of the firſt and moſt important truſt and conſideration; and ſo little are the public affections underſtood among the people; ſo faint are the impreſſions of theſe virtues upon their minds, that while one part of them avowedly commits, another yields, with apparent ſatisfaction, at leaſt, without reſentment, to ſuch egregious abuſes, in the adminiſtration of the public affairs. In making theſe obſervations, we ſhould be ſorry to incur the cenſure of either indelicacy or impropriety; but in ſpeaking the language of truth to the people, when it becomes proper and neceſſary for their intereſt, we fear neither the rage of party, nor the inſolence of power.

PUBLIC affairs we are, every day, told, are the buſineſs of none but the public ſervants, to whoſe diſcretion they ought to be entirely and implicitly committed, as if the public itſelf, had no title and no intereſt, to interfere with public meaſures, to inquire into the miſconduct of public ſervants, or to puniſh thoſe enormities of public guilt, of which the preſent times afford examples, perhaps not to be paralleled in the hiſtory of the world! That private perſon, who teſtifies any uncommon degree of anxiety about the conduct of public affairs, the principles of the conſtitution, the preſervation of the public proſperity, and the ſources from which

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it flows, is almoſt always ſingled out as an object of diſapprobation, and his character, immediately, marked, with a degree of imprudence, to which wiſe men, who never feel any paſſion ſo extravagant as that of an affection for the public, give the name of folly or inſanity * ; or when they mean to expreſs a ſtill ſtronger degree of contempt, borrowing the uſe of terms from the abuſe of religion, they, without heſitation or reſerve, beſtow the odious appellations of fanatics and enthuſiaſts, upon all thoſe who betray any ſymptoms of public paſſion, or

* In this manner, has public virtue been treated, even in the Britiſh ſenate. A late Houſe of Commons, we know not whether from a concurrence of opinions, or other motives, had been devoted to miniſterial meaſures, until they had, almoſt, completed the ruin of the State. But when, in voting the propriety of diminiſhing the influence of the Crown, they began to diſcover ſome ſymptoms of public ſpirit, they were told by a right honourable gentleman, then in office, that they had been ſeized with *a phrenzy*. In this treatment of the Houſe, the right honourable gentleman was encouraged by the immenſe wealth he had acquired in the public ſervice, and by the confidence of the Sovereign which, he knew, he poſſeſſed. But it was a ſpecies of inſolence, which nothing but the almoſt unbounded liberty of ſpeech, that ought ever to prevail in a Britiſh ſenate, could either excuſe or palliate. The right honourable gentleman, like his noble colleague, might, perhaps, plead ſincerity, as an apology for his conduct: for if, in the pious zeal of reformation, a man ſhould begin to recommend chaſtity and ſobriety to a proſtitute, ſhe would, infallibly, conclude that he was either mad, or———

diſcover

diſcover any evidence of independent ſpirit. Even patriotiſm itſelf has now become a term of reproach.

ALL this contempt for the public paſſions, is covered under the ſpecious name of prudence, that darling virtue, which rivets the minds of men to the invariable purſuit of private intereſt, and from which, one muſt never depart, without incurring the charge of folly, inſanity, or enthuſiaſm. So moderate, indeed, is the ſtate of the public paſſions, in the preſent times, that the loſs of an empire to the ſtate, has not been found ſufficient to excite the public reſentment againſt the original authors of that ſignal and irreparable public calamity. As if the rectitude of a miniſter's motives, of which we can know nothing, except from his own declarations, were a ſufficient apology and compenſation to the ſtate, for a miſconduct the moſt egregious, and conſequences the moſt deſtructive; for the contraction of a hundred and twenty millions of debt; for the lives of a hundred thouſand men, and for the loſs of an American world, we have liſtened, with patience, in his defence, to tales ſoftly, indeed, and pleaſantly told, but which were only fit for the amuſement of children, and to the ſtale and frivolous pretext of honeſty of intention; a cloak which has been frequently worn, by incorrigible folly, and determined profligacy.

AMIDST all this depravity of the public opinion and ſentiment, with regard to the public paſſions, it would be, indeed, a ſingularity worthy of remark, ſhould Scottiſh patrons, in the ſelection and nomination of miniſters, be found capable of preſerving an invariable attention, as well as attachment, to the public intereſt. But if their manner of proceeding, in times paſt, may be allowed to form a rule, from which to judge of their conduct in times to come, we are ſorry to find, that, in conſiſtency with truth, we cannot pay them ſo illuſtrious a compliment.

A PERIOD of about ſeventy years has elapſed ſince patronage laſt received the ſanction of a legal eſtabliſhment in this country; yet, far from being certain, it remains ſtill a matter violently conteſted, whether merit has been the capital object of the choice of patrons in the nomination of miniſters. Many perſons, eminent in reſpect of learning, character, and abilities, have, no doubt, been ſince admitted into the church; but no one will venture to aſcribe the diſtinguiſhed merit of theſe reſpectable and venerable characters, to the influence of the patronage laws. On the other hand, it cannot be diſputed, that inſtances there are, not a few, in which, not literature nor abilities, nor even unſtained morality, have been the objects of the peculiar attention and regard of patrons, in the ſelection and appointment of miniſters.

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HAD patrons formed the becoming and ſpirited reſolution of giving an unequivocal preference to merit in the appointment of clergymen, we ſhould, before this time, have been furniſhed with deciſive and inconteſtable evidence of their intentions. Some public inſtitutions we ſhould have ſeen eſtabliſhed, where candidates for the miniſtry might be allowed, in preſence of ſelect judges, to make public trials of their elocution, learning, and abilities. To compoſe the venerable council, this illuſtrious monument of diſintereſted ſentiment and public ſpirit, we ſhould have beheld characters, the moſt celebrated for taſte, learning, and abilities, invited and collected from all parts of the kingdom, both from among the laity, and the clergy. An inſtitution of this kind, had it been formed, would have afforded a demonſtration of the beneficent intentions and public ſpirit of patrons, and might have gone far to ſatisfy the minds of men, that patronage was, really, a wiſe and ſalutary ſyſtem. But no trace of any ſuch inſtitution is diſcoverable in the hiſtory of patronage, either in this, or in any other country; nor of any ſimilar inſtitution, by which merit could be properly aſcertained.

WE pretend not to ſay, that an inſtitution, ſuch as has been mentioned, would not be liable to abuſe, for that is an evil incident to all human inſtitutions.

But, while it would afford an illuſtrious example of liberality, and diſintereſted ſentiment among patrons, it would be attended with the moſt ſalutary conſequences both to literature and morals among the clergy. And, in animadverting upon the imperfection of all human eſtabliſhments, we ſhould be loſt in admiration of that ſingular diſplay of public ſpirit, by which the characters of Scottiſh patrons had been ſo univerſally, and ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed. But the conduct of patrons has left us no deciſive teſtimony of diſintereſted intentions, no ſubject for panegyric, no object of admiration!

SINCE, therefore, patrons, by their conduct, in time paſt, have eſtabliſhed no inſtitutions, and produced no evidence, to enable us to judge, with certainty, whether merit was the invariable object of their choice, we muſt reſort to the nature of the ſyſtem, and the ſituation of patrons, and from thence determine, whether, even allowing them to be good men, they have been, and will, naturally, be directed, in the nomination of paſtors, by the conſiderations of merit and reputation. In the conduct of this inquiry, we ſhall be able, perhaps, to collect ſome information from the effects of patronage, where it has prevailed in the civil departments of government.

THE moſt eminent ſpecies of patronage, ſo to ſpeak, that is known to the conſtitution, is the prerogative

rogative which is, by law, exerciſed by the Sovereign, in the nomination of all the civil and military officers of the ſtate. We pretend not to diſpute the wiſdom and extenſive utility of this power, with which the Sovereign is inveſted by the fundamental principles of the conſtitution. But, in admiring the excellence of that ſyſtem, and in profeſſing the moſt perfect reſpect for the executive power, we cannot deny, that, in the exerciſe of this power, are diſcoverable, abuſes, which are of the moſt pernicious conſequence to the ſtate, and require the hand of correction. Theſe abuſes in the executive department of government, the beſt men, and the firmeſt lovers of their country, may, without offence, and without being chargeable with a ſpirit of faction or ſedition, deſire to ſee remedied. But no man, who knows the excellence and perfection of the conſtitution, would ever wiſh to ſee an alteration of the ſyſtem itſelf, which by preſerving ſo great an extent of liberty to the people, is the ſource of a degree of public happineſs which, perhaps, no other nation in the world had ever enjoyed.

FROM what has been obſerved, we mean to infer, that if an abuſe, of extenſive and pernicious conſequence, is diſcernible in the exerciſe of the civil patronage of the Sovereign, whoſe actions, from their peculiar eminence, are ſurrounded with that

glare of light which ſhould, naturally, exclude every improper tranſaction; what abuſes may not be expected from the exerciſe of rights of patronage lodged in the hands of inferior men, whoſe miſconduct is more obſcure, leſs liable to detection, and leſs the ſubject of public attention, animadverſion, and inveſtigation?

THE illuſtrious and popular qualities of birth, fortune, learning, wiſdom, abilities, fill the councils, and direct the meaſures of the Sovereign; yet with theſe ſingular advantages, poſſeſſed by the Crown, it is a matter of public notoriety, that, in the diſtribution of offices and of power, the moſt enormous abuſes, are, often, committed. His Majeſty's miniſters, few in number, ſurrounded by private connections, giving way to the natural ties of blood, and private friendſhip, or to the importunities of ſolicitation, ſupported by a weight of parliamentary influence, are known to have filled many of the various departments of the ſtate, with men, who, however reſpectable in point of rank, and inoffenſive in their manners, poſſeſs yet no title, from their abilities, love of the public, and application to buſineſs, to govern our provinces, to lead our armies, to command our fleets, and to fill the benches of our courts of juſtice.

WE mean not, here, to indulge that licentious ſpirit, which, without reſpect to the public welfare, delights in wounding the private feelings of men.

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But, when an appeal is made to the public, upon ſubjects of general concern and importance, we cannot ſubmit to the meanneſs of duplicity, concealment, or equivocation. It has never been the propenſity of our diſpoſition, nor the object of our purſuit, to ſcatter the poiſon of invective over the mantles of men, who even poſſeſs ſituations, which nature had never made for them. In the kind partiality and bounty of fortune, they have found an ample ſupply for the ſterility of nature; and while they are not the proper objects of envy, to offer an inſult to their underſtandings, has no tendency to the public good, and is conſiſtent, only, with the malignity of private reſentment, which we equally diſclaim and diſdain.

WE would ſpurn the malevolence that would blaſt, and the inſolence that would vilify the private characters of men honoured by the Sovereign, with, even, the name of a public office. But we muſt take care, in ſpeaking to the people, to preſerve the impartiality that can diſtinguiſh, and the dignity that will not bend, from the force of any motive, to offer an injury to truth. The public have a right to be informed; and whether the ſource of information lies in the prerogatives of the Crown, or the liberties of the people, it muſt be laid open, and expoſed to public view. From a general and notorious fact,

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in the exerciſe of the civil and conſtitutional patronage of the Crown, we have reaſoned, to the caſe of eccleſiaſtical patronages repoſed in the hands of private perſons, and we conclude, that if the former is marked with a pernicious enormity of abuſe, what evidence, or ſecurity, can we have, for an impartial, upright, and diſintereſted behaviour, in the exerciſe of the latter, which are not equally guarded nor defended againſt the encroachments of abuſe, and the errors of miſconduct? This leads us to conſider the peculiar ſituation of patrons, and to inquire, whether, allowing them to poſſeſs the beſt and moſt diſintereſted intentions towards the public good, they ſhall be able to defeat the combined influence of private connections, ſolicitation, and intereſt, and to carry their beneficent, and public-ſpirited intentions, fully, and effectually, into execution.

In looking about for a miniſter to a vacant congregation, the firſt object which, naturally, preſents itſelf to the mind of a patron, is the tutor of his children, a young man choſen by accident or ſlight recommendation, at a period of life when his education was unfiniſhed, his character not formed, and his abilities, except the mere capacity of acquiring an acquaintance with words, and the conſtruction of ſentences, altogether unknown. Should a patron himſelf have no family, and no tutor to provide for,

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the next object of his choice will, as naturally, be the tutor, choſen in the ſame manner, and in ſimilar circumſtances, of a near relation whom he loves, of a neighbour whom he eſteems, or of a man of rank, and parliamentary influence, who can return the favour in a different manner. We might appeal to the public opinion, whether, except a few nominations dictated by a ſenſe of merit, this is not the common method of ſupplying vacant congregations with miniſters; ſo that, from the very nature of the thing, as well as the common courſe of human affairs, under the preſent ſyſtem, merit cannot be the firſt object of a patron's attention, in the appointment of a miniſter.

IT is very poſſible, that a patron's tutor, or that of his neighbour or relation, may be a man of merit; for, by unimpeached morality, learning and abilities, are the characters of ſome of theſe young gentlemen diſtinguiſhed. At the ſame it is a truth which can admit of no diſpute, that a different ſtamp has marked the characters of many of them. It is, therefore, obvious, that the right of patronage, notwithſtanding the rank and education of patrons, may be attended with pernicious conſequences. In beſtowing a preſentation, in compliance with the requeſt of a man of rank and power, a patron is governed

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by a ſtrong ſenſe of private intereſt which, without offence, may be affirmed to be a very prevailing and forcible motive. In providing for his own tutor, a patron is influenced by the dictates of humanity, perhaps, of gratitude, and fulfilling the reaſonable expectations of the tutor. In liſtening to the recommendation of his neighbour or relation, a patron, without any nice inquiry, as to the character, abilities, or learning of the preſentee, is led by the natural ties of blood, or the benevolent principles of good neighbourhood, and private friendſhip.

IN this manner, by the gratification of paſſions, all of them allowable, and ſome of them highly commendable, in ſociety, the intereſts of literature and morality, may receive very deep and irreparable injuries. But yet it would certainly require a ſingular portion of public virtue, to diſregard all thoſe motives of conduct which, ſo commonly, influence the opinions, and direct the actions of mankind, and to give an invariable preference to merit, in the nomination and appointment of miniſters. This degree of public ſpirit, we obſerve, is not a common virtue, and we muſt be permitted to ſay, that we have yet ſeen no evidence ſufficient to ſatisfy, or convince us, that patrons merit a ſuperior place in the ſcale of the public affections.

IT is not here intended, to direct any illiberal reflections againſt the character or conduct of patrons; we only preſume to aſcribe to them, the common motives of human conduct, many of which are amiable. It is the vice inherent in the ſyſtem, and not any ſignal depravity in the ſentiments or opinions of patrons, we mean to reprobate, expoſe, and condemn; and, to all the world it muſt be evident, that there muſt be ſome very egregious and fundamental error in the nature of that ſyſtem, which, even when regulated, and conducted according to the dictates of the moſt amiable, and delightful paſſions known in ſociety, may, and often will, produce the moſt pernicious conſequences, with regard to the morals, literature, and abilities of the clergy; independent of its effects upon the character and manners of the people, which we have already had occaſion to treat of, at conſiderable length.

IN oppoſition to theſe natural and infallible effects of the ſyſtem of patronage and preſentations, let us take a ſhort view of the effects of popular elections; and, without aſcribing more virtue to the people than to the patrons, we ſhall perceive, that the advantage lies greatly on the ſide of popular elections.

INDIVIDUALS

INDIVIDUALS among the people, it muſt be admitted, may have particular friends to recommend, and may, therefore, like patrons, be ſeduced, by private connections, intereſt, and ſolicitation. But it is impoſſible, from the very nature of the thing, that every individual among the people, who are ſo numerous, can expect to have his private paſſions gratified, however violent, and however regardleſs of the public intereſt. This being the caſe, it is evident, that candidates for the miniſtry, muſt make it the object of their ſtudies and acquirements, to reſt their pretenſions, upon qualifications which ſhall unite the ſentiments and opinions of men of every deſcription. An unſullied reputation, a fine elocution, extenſive learning, diſtinguiſhed abilities! Theſe are the ſplendid accompliſhments, which are fit to dazzle the eyes, and conciliate the affections of the people at large. It is the neceſſary effect of popular elections, and not of the ſuperior virtue of the people, that theſe qualities muſt determine the fate of their elections; for, to aſcribe more virtue to the people than to the patrons, would be equally inconſiſtent with truth and candour; and, were it poſſible to inſpire the people with that delicacy and liberality of ſentiment, which often diſtinguiſh the characters of patrons, and other perſons of their rank in life, it would tend, in a conſpicuous manner, to enlarge and preſerve the public

public happineſs. But, in popular elections, the people, deſpairing of the gratification of private and intereſted paſſions, muſt, of neceſſity, reſt their determination upon qualities concerning the excellence of which, there ſhall not be a diſſenting voice. The ſubject of inquiry then is, who ſhall poſſeſs theſe qualities in the moſt eminent degree? This was the principle which governed the popular elections of Athens and of Rome; thoſe popular elections, which have left the world in equal aſtoniſhment and admiration, of the unparalleled abilities and ſucceſſes of thoſe men, whom the people had ſelected, and to whom the people had committed the adminiſtration of the various departments of the public affairs!

FROM this view of the natural effects of church ſettlements, by preſentations and popular elections, the impartiality and diſcernment of the public will decide, which of the two forms of ſettlement is the moſt uſeful and eligible.

IN ſupport of church ſettlements by means of preſentations, it was farther ſaid under this head, that patrons cannot, at any rate, make a very bad choice, nor do any material injury to the intereſts of religion and literature, ſince they can only chooſe from among thoſe perſons who are licenſed by the church.

IT was not without ſurprize, that we have heard this argument, repeatedly, urged by the friends of patronage, with all the confidence of concluſive reaſoning, without once attending, or ſeeming to attend, that it might, with equal force, be uſed as an anſwer to almoſt every objection offered againſt the propriety of popular elections. If the patron cannot make an improper choice, becauſe he can only chooſe a licenſed clergyman, the people are preciſely in the ſame ſituation, for they have not yet claimed a right to elect a perſon, who is not licenſed and found qualified by the church; ſo that this argument is equally concluſive on both ſides of the queſtion, which reduces it to nothing. Indeed, to employ ſuch an argument, was altogether frivolous; and if it was not intended to miſlead, it certainly proceeded from a miſconception, or a very partial conſideration of the nature of the ſubject under diſcuſſion.

SECT.

SECT. X.

How far Popular Elections are pernicious, in reſpect of the incapacity of the People to judge of the proper Qualifications of Miniſters, who are their Teachers.

THE incapacity of the people to judge of the talents and qualifications of a miniſter of the Goſpel, is the foundation of the preſent view of the conſequences of popular elections. This objection to the election of the people, appears to be not a little ſurpriſing. But we are, every where, ſtruck with the moſt palpable contradictions in the ſyſtem of reaſoning, which has been adopted by the friends of patronage. When they are aſhamed of carrying their principles ſo far, as to deny the people the exerciſe of any power, in relation to the appointment of miniſters, they maintain, that the people are ſtill allowed to exerciſe the important right of objecting to doctrines and morals. This neceſſarily ſuppoſes, that the people underſtand the doctrines of Chriſtianity. The direct contrary ſuppoſition, however, is the foundation of the preſent objection; for, if the people are not able to judge of the qualifications of a miniſter, it can only ariſe from their not underſtanding the doctrines of Chriſtianity, which have now been taught for about two thouſand years,

and which are admitted to be eſſential to their everlaſting felicity. It may be affirmed that, if, during that period of time, the people have not acquired a competent knowledge of the doctrines of Chriſtianity, they will remain for ever ignorant of that divine ſyſtem. In this view, there is a ſingularity attending the objection which cannot eaſily be overlooked. Although Chriſtianity has been inculcated for near two thouſand years, although the knowledge of it is confeſſedly eſſential to eternal ſalvation, it appears to be received as a maxim, by the partiſans of patronage, that the people are altogether unqualified to underſtand that divine doctrine, and, by conſequence, to judge of the talents of thoſe who are employed to propagate and preſerve it in remembrance. In all other arts and ſciences, the knowledge of prior times, deſcends to poſterity, but theology, it ſeems, though continually taught, is for ever to remain unintelligible.

ALL the invention of the ſchools has not, hitherto, been able to produce a more perfect definition of an abſurdity; and, had it been the intention of the friends of patronage, to expoſe religion to the moſt utter contempt, they could not have accompliſhed their end, in a more effectual manner, than by repreſenting it as a ſyſtem of things, which is always to be propagated, but never to be underſtood; which is

is eſſential to eternal ſalvation, and yet cannot be comprehended by thoſe whoſe ſalvation is the object of its eſtabliſhment; which has been taught for two thouſand years, with the moſt unremitting attention, and the moſt perfect ſincerity, but of which the people remain ſtill as ignorant as they were when Chriſtianity was firſt announced to the world! In conſidering an objection, which is neceſſarily attended with ſuch inconſiſtencies and ſingularities, it is ſomewhat difficult to preſerve that degree of gravity, which the nature of the ſubject ſhould otherwiſe command. If, on the other hand, it ſhould be admitted, that the people comprehend the doctrines of Chriſtianity, it would ſeem to put an end to the queſtion; for to ſay that the people underſtand and cannot judge, is a paradox, the ſolution of which ſhall be reſerved for perſons who can command more leiſure, and poſſeſs more ingenuity. We propoſe to treat the ſubject in a more eaſy and ſimple manner.

THE principles of Chriſtianity, therefore, may be conſidered as divided into two claſſes. 1. The more ſublime truths reſpecting the exiſtence and eſſence of the Deity, and the myſteries of the incarnation and redemption, which are equally incomprehenſible to the capacities of the patrons, the clergy, and the people. Theſe things are to be ta-

ken as ſo many facts aſſerted from the authority of divine inſpiration, and which it ſeems impious to diſpute, and unneceſſary to demonſtrate. 2. The more ſimple truths of religion, which relate to the offices of juſtice, benevolence, charity, humanity, and all the moral duties and obligations; which are, ſo ſtrongly, recommended, and ſo beautifully illuſtrated and exemplified in the admirable and divine ſyſtem of the revelations. Theſe particulars, which compoſe the moſt familiar, as well as the moſt uſeful part of our religious ſyſtem, are adapted to the capacities of every order of men; are eaſily underſtood, and ought to be recommended and inculcated, with all the ſincerity of religion, and all the powers of eloquence; for it is upon the force, and regular obſervance of ſuch duties, that the exiſtence and happineſs of ſociety, moſt eſſentially, depend. Conſidering religion in this laſt view, it will be readily admitted that the people poſſeſs a degree of judgment, fully ſufficient to decide in matters of paſtoral election; and, with regard to the former view, which reſpects the more ſublime truths of religion, it is not the narrow capacity of man, even in the moſt enlightened ſituation, which can pretend to unfold it.

THE proper qualifications of a miniſter of the Goſpel, therefore, ſeem to be, 1. An unſullied reputation. 2. A conſiderable ſhare of learning, human,

man, as well as divine. 3. The power of communication.

THE firſt of theſe particulars, reputation, conſiſts in fact, and may eaſily be collected from the neighbourhood, or from the acquaintance of the candidates.

LEARNING, the ſecond particular, may be taken for granted, when the candidate has undergone the eſtabliſhed courſe of academical education, and obtained a licenſe. But even, here, the people, in forming their judgment, and deciding in the election, may have recourſe to external evidence. Learning, eſpecially when eminent, has a reputation, as well as morality; and the people may be informed of the one, as well as the other, from the opinions of perſons in whom they repoſe confidence.

THE laſt particular, the power of communication, when ſupported by a proper ſtock of ideas, and exerciſed with judgment, is, perhaps, the moſt uſeful talent which a miniſter can poſſeſs; and, of this, it ſeems impoſſible to deny, that the people are qualified to judge; unleſs it ſhould be held, that they cannot diſtinguiſh between perſpicuity and confuſion in ſpeech; between a ſweet ſound and a harſh one, in elocution; and that they know not a perſon whom they

they hate to hear, and cannot underſtand, from one who delights them by the eaſe and harmony of his elocution; inſtructs them by the clearneſs and plainneſs of his conceptions, and excites, agitates, and commands their paſſions by the perſuaſive power, and irreſiſtible force of his eloquence.

UPON the whole, when the different particulars, which conſtitute the character of a miniſter of the Goſpel, are conſidered, we perceive not that any ſolid reaſon, can, from thence, ariſe, againſt the election of the people, while, on the other hand, the objection here made to their power of election, appears to be attended with circumſtances which afford ſubjects of amuſement, rather than command any ſerious degree of attention.

UNDER this head, it has, however, been maintained by the partiſans of patronage, that not only are the people unfit judges, from the circumſtances which have been examined; it is alſo abſurd, they ſay, that perſons ſhould have the choice of their own teachers, who muſt be preſumed to be more wiſe and knowing than themſelves.

WHEN the object in view, in any argument, is not the diſcovery of truth, but the ſupport of an eſtabliſhed ſyſtem, it ſeems neceſſary that the moſt palpable

pable contradictions ſhould be entirely overlooked; otherwiſe, by a cloſe attention to conſiſtency of reaſoning, it might happen, that the very foundations of the ſyſtem itſelf might be weakened, the ſuperſtructure might totter, and be in danger of falling in pieces. Thoſe perſons who exult ſo much in the force of the argument, that there is an abſurdity in the people's having the nomination of paſtors, becauſe that would put it in their power to chooſe their own teachers, do not once attend, or are deſirous to overlook, that patrons, according to the preſent ſyſtem, appoint their own teachers, in the ſame manner that the people would do, in the caſe of a popular election; and, what is more remarkable, this power is competent to patrons, even when they are minors of 14 years of age, for they can then exerciſe their rights of patronage, and not only chooſe their own teachers, but impoſe teachers upon every pariſh in the kingdom, conſiſting, perhaps, of aged, grave, and learned men.

THE friends of patronage are, likewiſe, upon this ſubject, inattentive to another very obvious and natural obſervation, that, if it be abſurd for a man to chooſe his own teacher, it muſt be infinitely more abſurd for him, eſpecially, when a minor, to chooſe teachers for other people, with whoſe taſtes, inclinations,

tions, and capacities, he is, in a great meaſure, unacquainted.

A THIRD very material conſideration has eſcaped the friends of patronage, in forming their opinions upon the preſent ſubject; they ſeem to miſtake the very nature of the office of a miniſter of the Goſpel. Clergymen are not, properly ſpeaking, teachers, an appellation beſtowed upon thoſe, who are employed in the correction and education of children; they are public ſervants, choſen to diſpenſe and celebrate the ordinances of religion, like judges who are appointed to adminiſter juſtice to the people, in civil affairs; or members of the legiſlature, whoſe duty it is to know and practiſe, the important ſcience of legiſlation.

IF, therefore, it be abſurd for the people to chooſe a miniſter of the Goſpel, who is a public ſervant, it ſhould ſeem to be equally abſurd in them, to elect a judge or a member of the legiſlature; and, rather more ſo, ſince, in general, they know more of the principles of religion, than either of law, or the ſcience of legiſlation. It has been often contended, that it would be inconvenient, to give the election of judges and legiſlators to the people; but, unleſs it be implied in the preſent argument uſed by the friends of patronage, it has never yet been maintained,

tained, that ſuch an inſtitution would be attended with any abſurdity; for if it were, it would eſtabliſh a ſingular poſition in politics, that without an abſurdity, legiſlatures, laws, judges, could never have exiſted, ſince of all theſe, the people are the original and indiſputable fountain.

BUT let it be ſuppoſed, that miniſters are teachers in the ſtricteſt acceptation of the term; ſhall it from thence follow, that the people cannot enjoy the right of election? It muſt be obſerved, that this argument, if ſolid, is equally fatal to the rights of patrons and people; for of both, the one as well as the other, the miniſters are the teachers. Upon what principle of reaſon can it be maintained, that a part of the people, the patrons, can chooſe their own teachers, while this right is ſaid to be an abſurdity when claimed by the whole! It is not eaſy to conceive, that reaſon ſhould ever furniſh a principle for defending ſuch a poſition. The concluſion, therefore, according to the argument, is, that neither patrons nor people, can elect the miniſters of the Goſpel, becauſe they are their teachers; who, then, are to be the electors?

To carry on the illuſtration a little farther; ſhall the king be deprived of the nomination of all the Biſhops of England, becauſe they are his Majeſty's ſpiritual

ſpiritual teachers, and the informers of his Majeſty's conſcience, as well as of thoſe of the people? If the preſent argument has any foundation in principle, it muſt be this, that a man ought not to poſſeſs the power of appointing perſons who are to practiſe in arts and profeſſions, of which he himſelf is ignorant, or in which he is not ſo well informed as the perſons appointed; ſhall, therefore, his Majeſty be deprived of the power of naming the judges, becauſe he is not a lawyer? And of appointing all the officers of the navy and revenue, becauſe he is not a ſailor, a book-keeper, or an accomptant? Muſt not one chooſe his phyſician, becauſe he has not ſtudied phyſic? His lawyer, becauſe he has not ſtudied law, and is unacquainted with the eloquence of the bar? His architect, becauſe he is unacquainted with the art of building?

IN all theſe particulars, in which the perſon chooſing, is allowed to be ignorant of the arts and profeſſions of the perſons choſen, the unlimited right of choice is admitted and confirmed beyond contradiction. No one can ſay, that Chriſtians are to be held ignorant of the principles of Chriſtianity, but ſtill it is maintained, that they cannot, without an abſurdity, exerciſe the right of chooſing their own miniſter, who is to diſpenſe the ordinances of religion, which they know and underſtand. If a doctrine

a doctrine, ſuch as this, which deſpiſes all analogy of reaſoning, and all conſiſtency of argument, ſhall be adopted and liſtened to, it is impoſſible to ſay, what paradoxes may not be received, what contradictions may not be eſtabliſhed, and what ſoleciſms may not be introduced. But it ſeems unneceſſary, any longer, to inveſtigate the conſequences of an argument, which, upon reflection, muſt appear to be utterly unſupportable, while any attention is paid, either to conſiſtency of reaſoning, or to the proper nature of the clerical office.

SECT. XI.

How far Popular Elections affect the Polite in Manners and Accompliſhments, among the Clergy.

FORM, and ornament, in behaviour and converſation, we are not diſpoſed to treat, as altogether trivial and unconnected with utility. They have a conſiderable influence on manners; and in poliſhing the rude, and adding to the amiable in our diſpoſitions, they multiply the enjoyments which enter into the compoſition of ſocial happineſs. Were it, therefore, allowable for any one, without examination, to indulge a predilection for any particular ſyſtem, we ſhould ſay, that we feel a very ſtrong propenſity to promote, among the

clergy, the cultivation of thoſe elegant accompliſhments, which are ſaid to be endangered by the introduction of popular elections. It is, therefore, evident, that we enter upon the conſideration of the ſubject of the preſent ſection, not without a conſiderable ſhare of prepoſſeſſion. But in admiring the beauty, we muſt take care, not to over-rate the value, nor miſtake the ſource, or degree of utility, of theſe ornamental virtues.

IT is owing to the flexibility and variety of which the human character is ſuſceptible, that every ſituation in life produces a ſet of ideas and manners, in many reſpects, peculiar to itſelf. From the ſplendid eminence of royalty, to the obſcure ſituation of the loweſt inhabitant of the ſtate, the diſtance is immenſe, and the differences, in manners and converſation, are various, which are to be found in the different intermediate ranks. In vain might it be attempted to reduce all theſe varieties to one ſtandard, and to give the ſame turn of thought, ſentiment, converſation, and external behaviour, to men of different fortunes, ranks, profeſſions, and education. To endeavour to communicate to every cobler, taylor, or porter, the eaſe, grace, gaiety, wit, elegance, converſation of my Lord Cheſterfield, or even of leſs accompliſhed perſons of his rank in life, might deſerve to be celebrated, as one

of

of the wildeſt, and moſt chimerical projects, which the ſpirit of novelty or reformation had ever invented. The fact certainly is, that manners, both in reſpect of ſentiment and behaviour, are formed by the ſituations in which perſons are placed, and admit of no conſiderable change, without a change of ſituation; nor, after a certain period of life, can manners be ſenſibly altered by an alteration of rank and place.

THIS variety of manners is found to be attended with little inconvenience in ſociety. Thoſe whoſe manners are ſimilar, naturally aſſociate together, and, thereby, render ſociety agreeable; indeed, the manners of the different ranks are not always offenſive to each other. It is not a difference in manners that creates diſguſt, but a frivolous affectation or imitation of manners, which, as they are not natural or uſual to the rank in which they are imitated, cannot be accompanied with eaſe, elegance, or propriety. In vain is it to force manners, which are not the natural reſult of ſituation, rank, and education. To reduce all men to the ſame level, and to diffuſe the ſame manners among all men, are, ſcarcely, different things, ſince the one cannot exiſt without the other; and as, in this country, beſides other particulars, certain diſtinctions have taken too deep a hold of the mind, to admit of

the former, ſo we can never hope to ſee the latter.

FROM theſe obſervations it follows, that it is altogether unneceſſary, to entertain much anxiety concerning the manners, which ſhall prevail in the different ranks, in ſociety; for the manners, naturally reſulting from ſituation, are ſcarcely alterable, and are, probably, upon the whole, the beſt adapted to promote the public happineſs.

WE owe it, perhaps, chiefly, to the moderate eccleſiaſtical eſtabliſhment of Scotland, that the character of our clergy, is diſtinguiſhed, by a purity of manners, and regularity of life, which are not found to prevail among the clergy of almoſt any other country. We muſt, however, allow, that, from the line of their education, and the extent of their livings, they are not poſſeſſed of thoſe advantages which could qualify them to excel in the circles of the gay, the polite, and the elegant. To collect, almoſt, all one's ideas from books, and to communicate them to few, or none, but boys, which is generally the occupation of the young clergy, till about the age of thirty, is by no means fitted to acquire the graces and the arts of polite converſation and manners, in the common acceptation of the words; and after that period of life, they become a very difficult acquiſition,

ſhould

ſhould even the ſituation of the clergy be ſuppoſed to admit of theſe gay and ſplendid accompliſhments. It, therefore, equally concerns the character and the wiſdom of the clergy, to reſt their utility and influence upon circumſtances of a different kind, without vainly attempting to derive dignity or importance, from the cultivation of a ſcience, in which, from the neceſſary operation of natural cauſes, they can never hope to attain any degree of eminence or perfection.

BUT, although the manners of the different ranks in ſociety, cannot, eaſily, or naturally, admit of alteration; though it muſt be confeſſed, that the clergy, however reſpectable their characters, are not in a ſituation favourable to the external graces of manners and converſation, in common phraſe, there is yet a ſpecies of politeneſs and good manners, in which they are qualified to excel, and which it becomes, equally, their profeſſion, and their characters, to cultivate and maintain. Amidſt all the differences of rank, and the varieties of manners which are found to prevail, there is one principle which ought to pervade, and, to the honour of human nature, does, in fact, pervade and diſtinguiſh, more or leſs, the manners of every rank; it is the amiable principle of benevolence, the ſource of pure manners, and genuine politeneſs.

FROM what has been already ſaid, in former parts of this inquiry, it is clear, that popular elections have a peculiar tendency to excite and diffuſe, among the clergy, this amiable paſſion of benevolence, and to extend its effects beyond the inſignificant object of an individual, to the more enlarged circle of a community. Let us, therefore, take a view of the circumſtances of the clergy under the government of popular elections, and we ſhall find, that they are placed in a ſituation which ſhould, naturally, produce the beſt, and the moſt exalted ſpecies of politeneſs, that which proceeds from the influence of extended benevolence, or the love of mankind. This is, indeed, in every ſenſe, the only foundation of true politeneſs; but it ſeems, more peculiarly, to befit the character and dignity of that order of men, who ſtile themſelves, not without propriety, the diſciples of the Son of God.

ACCORDING to the eccleſiaſtical inſtitutions of Scotland, the education of the clergy muſt be liberal. From this circumſtance, it is a neceſſary conſequence, that they ſhould, in general, acquire a conſiderable ſhare of knowledge, and liberality of ſentiment. The nature of their office, as the ſervants of God, and the guides and miniſters of the people, in holy things, is conſiderably elevated; and

and this muſt be ſufficient to inſpire a proper ſenſe of dignity. They have acceſs to the firſt company, in the different parts of the kingdom, where they reſide; which cannot fail to poliſh their converſation, and improve their manners, eſpecially, as in their ſituation they will, naturally, love that kind of ſociety, where they meet with ſome of the ideas of the world, a ſhew of elegance, and an appearance of cultivated reaſon. They owe their livings to the favour and approbation of the people; from which it follows, that the people will become the objects of their reſpect and attachment. This will, naturally, produce that extended benevolence, or love of mankind, which is amiable in every man, but which ought to be the peculiar, and the brighteſt ornament, of a miniſter of the Goſpel.

IT, therefore, appears, that the ſituation of the clergy is by no means unfavourable to the cultivation of that genuine and exalted ſpecies of politeneſs, which conſtitutes, equally, the ornament, utility, and dignity of the clerical character. The extenſive knowledge acquired from a liberal education; the dignity, naturally, inſpired by the enjoyment of an office, in itſelf, conſiderably elevated and important; the culture of the firſt company, the beſt ſchool of manners and converſation; the influence of extended benevolence, or the love of mankind: this combination

combination of circumſtances, with which the ſituation of the clergy is attended, and which are multiplied, not diminiſhed, by popular elections, ſhould, in the natural courſe of things, abſtracting from mere external movements, produce, in a clergyman, one of the moſt accompliſhed, as it is already, one of the moſt ſacred characters, in ſociety.

A MISTAKE, therefore, we ſhould ſuppoſe it is, to maintain that the introduction of popular elections is pernicious to the polite in manners and accompliſhments among the clergy, in the proper ſenſe of theſe expreſſions. From what has been ſaid, it appears ſufficiently obvious, that popular elections tend rather to promote the very ſource and ſpirit of genuine politeneſs.

To what has been advanced, we may be allowed to add, that, in relation to the differences in the ranks of the people committed to the care of a clergyman, the duties of his office are mixed. He muſt aſſociate with, and adminiſter conſolation to the loweſt, as well as the higheſt perſon in the pariſh. It is, therefore, no unreaſonable opinion to ſay, that his character ſhould, in ſome meaſure, be likewiſe mixed; partly popular, partly elegant and polite. That man is rather an object of pity than admiration, who, by artificial refine-

ments,

ments, has poliſhed his taſte and manners to a degree, which will not ſuffer him to enter, without pain, into the ſociety of thoſe, with whom, by the laws of God, and the duties of his office, he is bound to aſſociate. It ſeems, therefore, not improper, that not only extended benevolence, but popular converſation and manners, ſhould mix themſelves in the character of a clergyman.

THOUGH no enemy to the ornamental virtues of elegance and politeneſs, we can never admit, eſpecially in a clergyman, the propriety of that ſpecies of politeneſs, which, without being laid on the foundations of benevolence, depends, entirely, upon mere ceremony, and refinement of external manners. Though no enemy to innocent amuſements, and liberality of ſentiment, we cannot, entirely, commend the levity, ſhould it even acquire the name of ſprightlineſs, of that clergyman, who ſhould enter, without reſerve, into all the faſhionable follies of the young Laird who reſides in his neighbourhood. A polite deportment, without licentious manners, gravity and dignity in the character of a clergyman, without the illiberality and auſterity of former times, are, doubtleſs, attainable accompliſhments, and have an infallible tendency to make the clergy, at once, in the higheſt degree, uſeful and reſpectable. But we are afraid, we have ventured too far, in preſuming to form a

plan

plan of conduct, for the reverend and learned fathers of the church.

It only remains, to take notice of an obſervation, which has been mentioned under this head, as if it were inconſiſtent with the dignity of a clergyman, to receive his living as a favour, from the hands of the people. This doctrine we have heard inſinuated by ſome clergymen, in the public debates, upon the queſtion reſpecting patronage, and popular elections.

If, in ſpurning the favour of the people, the ſentiments of the clergymen, who affected to treat it with ſo much contempt, had been dictated by a genuine and manly ſpirit of independence, their conduct would always admit of apology, and merit reſpect. But while, in rejecting with diſdain, a popular favour, they ſeemed to feel a pride, in deſcending to receive their livings from the hand of an individual patron, we are at a loſs, upon any liberal principle how to account for their conduct. Were independence the object of their wiſhes, that is beſt attained by a popular election, where the favour, by being divided into ſo many parts, can ſcarcely be ſaid to be due to any perſon; but, if an obligation muſt be due, what man poſſeſſed of dignity, or liberality of ſentiment, could heſitate, in preferring the favour of

the

the people, to that of any individual, however reſpectable? If a man aſpire at an abſolute independence of all the world, he muſt retreat to the wilderneſs. Civil ſociety, in all its varieties, affords no place for him; nor can the loſs of his preſence be felt with any degree of ſeverity; for he who would not deign to receive a favour from the people, cannot, naturally, be ſuppoſed to poſſeſs the affection, liberality, and magnanimity, which would confer a favour upon them.

SECT. XII.

An examination of the Objection offered againſt Popular Elections, as being productive of Popular Tumults and Animoſities.

POPULAR elections, it has been ſaid, would neceſſarily give riſe to animoſities, which would deſtroy the happineſs of private families; and, to popular tumults, which would diſturb the tranquillity of the ſtate.

IN a commercial and luxurious age, when the frame of the human body, as well as the ſentiments of the mind, have acquired an uncommon degree of delicacy, it is not ſurpriſing that an argument of this kind ſhould be liſtened to, with an attentive ear,

ear, and ſhould be found to make very deep impreſſions. Accordingly, the idea of a popular commotion begins to be more dreadful to many perſons, than that of an earthquake, a famine, or a peſtilence.

IN ſurveying the hiſtory of our own and other countries, we have obſerved, that while the efforts of eccleſiaſtical freedom have been vilified with the odious appellations of fanaticiſm and enthuſiaſm, thoſe of civil liberty, have been branded with the names of faction, tumult, and licentiouſneſs. With theſe weapons, the inventions of groundleſs fear, or intereſted policy, has the ſpirit of liberty been always fought, and, ſometimes, conquered. Falſe names, like falſe coin, have, frequently, been found ſufficient, to impoſe upon the ſenſes of mankind. Such, in certain ſituations, and under certain circumſtances, is the imperfection of the human underſtanding, that it cannot, clearly, detect the fallacy, nor perceive the real intereſts of ſociety; but, giving way to the artful deception, will, often, ſuppreſs or extinguiſh the exerciſe of genuine liberty, under the appellation, and appearance of tumult and licentiouſneſs.

IT muſt be confeſſed, and not without regret, that, as under the influence of inſtitutions of ſlavery,

ry, the human character will, ſometimes, degenerate to an almoſt incredible degree of corruption and baſeneſs; ſo, on the other hand, the human mind, when inſpired and elevated with the love and purſuit of liberty, not able to preſerve a proper balance, may, ſometimes run into exceſſes, which, like a ſhort fever in the natural body, may diſturb, for a moment, the tranquillity of the body politic. But, as the love of liberty has no object, other than the public happineſs, the exceſſive fervour of the people will ſoon ſubſide, leaving the conſtitution in poſſeſſion of a more vigorous ſtate of health than it had formerly enjoyed, and without any mixture or ſeeds of diſeaſe, except what is inſeparable from the nature of human inſtitutions.

SUCH has, always, been the reſult of popular commotions reſpecting liberty, where the people were not thoroughly corrupted; and, if we may be allowed to reaſon to the future, from the experience of the paſt, we may venture to affirm, that ſuch will ever be the reſult of any exceſſes which may happen to proceed from the ſpirit of liberty. Theſe exceſſes, therefore, have, in themſelves, nothing formidable, and though they may, for a ſhort period, diſturb our repoſe; yet, when genuine and conſtitutional liberty is their object, they diffuſe a degree of happineſs, among mankind, and add a ſplendour and

dignity to the human character, which all the peace and tranquillity of ſlavery have never yet been able to attain.

IF we ſhould ſuffer our opinions to be influenced by the fear of popular tumults and private animoſities, it might ſoon be employed, perhaps, effectually, to diveſt us of our civil, as well as eccleſiaſtical liberties. It can ſcarcely be pretended, that popular elections of miniſters would occaſion more dangerous heats, or more bitter animoſities, than are, at preſent, excited, by the elections of members of parliament, in both parts of the united kingdom. And were the ſame partial, illiberal manner of reaſoning, which prevails with regard to the former, adopted, likewiſe, with reſpect to the latter, the freedom of the conſtitution could not exiſt for a moment.

A MAN, whoſe ſenſibility could not endure the idea of private animoſities, and whoſe mind, not able to command an extenſive view of conſequences, ſhould be unhinged, by the immediate terror of popular diſturbances, might ſit down and compoſe a law, not without plauſible appearances, for the abolition of parliaments, and the extinction of every trace of political liberty, which exiſts in the conſtitution. This law, however deteſtable, might be framed under a pretext of reſtoring tranquillity to the ſtate,

ſtate, and preventing thoſe popular tumults and animoſities, which make ſo violent an impreſſion on the imaginations of thoſe who are accuſtomed to look, with terror, on the evils of popular elections. Let us ſuppoſe a perſon, poſſeſſed of this pious deſign, with timid diſpoſitions, and limited views, meaning to commit his thoughts to writing, in the form of an act of parliament; and, without deviating farther from truth than is done by the friends of patronage, in their repreſentations of the evils of popular elections of miniſters, he would, naturally, expreſs himſelf in a manner ſomewhat to the following purpoſe:

"WHEREAS *the heats and animoſities, uſually attending the election of members of parliament, which often ſet the neareſt relations at variance, without hopes of reconciliation; the tumults and diſturbances, to the danger of valuable lives, which happen upon theſe occaſions; the great expence of money and of time, and the relaxation of induſtry, and evil habits of drunkenneſs, and diſſipation of every kind, which are thereby occaſioned, are all adverſe to the peace of ſociety, to the welfare of good government, pernicious to commerce, ſubverſive of the peace of private families, hurtful to the morals of the people, and productive of numberleſs other evils and inconveniencies:*

"*Therefore, to remedy theſe great and dangerous evils,*

" *may it pleaſe your Majeſty, that it be enacted, and* " *his Majeſty, with advice and conſent of the Lords* " *ſpiritual and temporal in this preſent parliament* " *aſſembled, and by the authority of the ſame, enacts* " *and ordains, That, in all time coming, the in-* " *ſtitution of parliaments be entirely aboliſhed, and* " *that the whole legiſlative and executive powers of the* " *ſtate be veſted ſolely in the King's majeſty, and his* " *royal ſucceſſors for ever; whereby* peace and quiet- " neſs may be preſerved, *&c.*"

MOVED by viſionary fears, and deceived by a ſuperficial view, or by falſe appearances, the author of this law, without any malignity of intention, would, at once, aboliſh the inſtitution of parliaments, in which, alone, the freedom of the civil conſtitution conſiſts. The dignity and felicity of liberty, he would exchange for the equivocal bleſſings of ſlavery; peace without ſecurity, and tranquillity without happineſs. Were the friends of patronage capable of conſtancy, in adhering to principles, or any degree of conſiſtency, in reaſoning, they would unite their efforts to accompliſh this deſirable end; for it ſeems impoſſible to ſay, that popular elections of miniſters, would produce any evils, which do not, in a more conſpicuous manner, accompany the elections of members of parliament, eſpecially, in boroughs; and, in our neighbouring country, where the

the right of parliamentary elections, eſtabliſhed upon more liberal principles, is more widely diffuſed among the great body of the people.

IT follows, that if in contemplating the nature and effects of the civil conſtitution of the ſtate, we were capable of giving way to thoſe viſionary apprehenſions of popular diſturbances, and that illiberal ſyſtem of reaſoning, which have dictated the introduction and preſervation of the patronage laws, we ſhould be unavoidably diſpoſed to alter the frame and principles of the conſtitution, and to diveſt it, entirely, of every ſhadow and appearance of popularity. To obtain a deceitful tranquillity, we ſhould conſent to a direct alienation of our natural and political liberties; and, in oppoſition to all the wiſdom of our anceſtors, and all the evidence which the experience of ages has accumulated, admit, that an abſolute deſpotiſm is the beſt form of government in the univerſe!

BUT amidſt all the corruption and degeneracy of the times, it muſt be aſcribed to that ſhare of popularity, though inconſiderable, which has long exiſted in the civil conſtitution of our country, that we are not yet prepared to offer up ſacrifices ſo injurious to the happineſs and dignity of our exiſtence, nor to make conceſſions which would be attended with ſo

much infamy. In reaſoning about the principles of the civil conſtitution, we are accuſtomed to diſtinguiſh the partial and temporary inconveniencies of private animoſities, and popular tumults, from thoſe more extenſive and alarming evils, which have an univerſal and permanent operation, in corrupting and deſtroying the ſources of public happineſs, and in degrading and debaſing the human character. In relation to the civil conſtitution, therefore, the people, at leaſt the ſuperior ranks, are able, with the pride and dignity of free men, to ſpurn the remoteſt approaches of civil ſlavery, and to treat, with a merited contempt, thoſe limited views, and illiberal ſyſtems, which would not ſuffer the partial and trivial inconveniencies of a day, to avoid the deep and extenſive calamities of centuries, and of ages.

WHILE our deliberations concerning the nature and effects of the civil conſtitution, are marked with ſo much force of juſt reaſoning, and ſo much dignity and liberality of ſentiment, it muſt be a matter of deep regret, that our ideas of eccleſiaſtical freedom, ſhould be diſtinguiſhed by ſo palpable a narrowneſs of conception and ſuperficiality of ſyſtem; and that we ſhould not be qualified to treat all invaſions of eccleſiaſtical liberty, with the ſame degree of reſentment, with which we are accuſtomed to behold every infringement of our civil privileges.

Both

Both theſe important rights, though, in words they are expreſſed by different names, are yet, in reality, ſo intimately connected, that we cannot abandon the one, without expoſing the other to danger.

It is, however, the misfortune of the people, that in politics, at leaſt, they cannot extend their views of utility, beyond the objects which are preſent to their ſenſes, nor carry their ideas of right, beyond what they have been accuſtomed to enjoy. It is, equally, the ſource of miſconduct and miſery, and the ſubject of regret, that while men are, with ſo much care and wiſdom, inſtructed as to the manner of life, which they are to lead in the world to come, they ſhould be ſo totally ignorant of the beſt methods of promoting their political happineſs, in that which is preſent. Were the rudiments of politics, taught with a degree of the ſame zeal and attention which are, ſo properly and ſo uſefully, employed in inculcating the principles of religion, it certainly could never happen, that any part of the people, ſhould feel with indifference as to their eccleſiaſtical, any more than their civil liberties, or that they ſhould entertain a thought of ſacrificing the one more than the other, of theſe beneficial and important rights, to the momentary and trivial apprehenſions of popular tumults, or the ſtill more inſignificant conſideration of private animoſities.

By

By politics, we here mean that exalted ſcience, which teaches the knowledge of the public happineſs, with the methods of attaining and preſerving it, and not that illiberal ſpecies of ſubtilty, which is employed by courtiers, in endeavouring to ſupplant each other, in the confidence of the Sovereign, and which, meriting only an appellation of contempt, ought never to be dignified with the reſpectable name of politics, in the proper acceptation of the term.

It is, indeed, ſomewhat ſurpriſing, that with the degree of political knowledge, which is uſually acquired from common obſervation and experience, the people, or any part of the people, ſhould be able to reconcile their feelings, to a ſurrender of a moſt important branch of their natural liberties, to avoid the trivial misfortunes of private animoſities and popular diſturbances, the mere fleeting occurrences of the day; or that they ſhould ever conceive the puſillanimous idea of relinquiſhing any part of thoſe rights and intereſts upon which their importance, felicity, and dignity depend, becauſe ſome individuals may ſuffer inconveniencies, or even periſh in preſerving and defending them; a ſyſtem of politics this which, were it every where extended to practice, would be found to be incompatible, not only with the welfare, but even with the exiſtence of civil

ſociety;

ſociety; for according to that ſyſtem, we ſhould have no navy, and no army, becauſe ſeamen are every day ſwallowed up by the ocean, and ſoldiers blown in the air from the mouth of cannon. In a word, this illiberal ſyſtem of politics and philoſophy, which would dwell only on the inſignificant evils and inconveniencies of an hour, and overlook the dreadful and permanent oppreſſions and calamities of ages, is altogether inconſiſtent with every idea of ſound policy, and good government.

THE ſcorching heat of the ſun, at certain ſeaſons of the year, is often inconvenient, and even exceſſively painful; ſhall we, therefore, wiſh that the ſun ſhould never ſhine? The rains of heaven, ſometimes, occaſion floods, which carry, every where, deſtruction and devaſtation; ſhall we, therefore, implore the divine Omnipotence, that he would cloſe the battlements, and ſhut up the clouds of heaven, in order that no more rain may, henceforth, deſcend upon the earth? The fury of the winds has, in different parts of the globe, produced hurricanes of the moſt dreadful nature, and the moſt deſtructive conſequences; ſhall we, therefore, pray that the winds may, entirely, ceaſe to blow, and that even the air may ceaſe to circulate, in order that a profound and fatal tranquillity may prevail, in the natural, ſimilar to that which the inſtitutions of ſlavery produce, in the moral government of the world?

As

As there is no climate on the globe, which is not ſubject to inconveniencies, ſo there is no inſtitution in the moral ſyſtem of the world, which is not accompanied with imperfections; and if, on account of the ſuppoſed inconveniencies, with which popular elections are attended, we were to adopt and carry to their full extent, the principles upon which the argument deduced from popular tumults and animoſities, is founded, I know not, whether we ſhould be permitted, even to move about, or to enjoy any right, either natural or political.

An aſſembly of the people, we are told, cannot be ſuffered to meet in order to exerciſe the natural right of electing a miniſter. Why? becauſe, when aſſembled and inflamed with the heat of popular contention, beſides entertaining private animoſities, they might be apt to commit very dangerous outrages againſt each other. This is the worſt conſequence which is pretended to be incident to popular elections; unleſs it were ridiculouſly ſuppoſed, that a popular election of Scottiſh clergymen ſhould have the effect of overturning the government; for the moſt violent enemies of popular elections, have not yet ventured to alledge, that the people, by meeting together to elect a miniſter, would be induced to offer any injury to the lives, liberties, or properties of their neighbours. It is even the effect of a violent preſumption

tion to affirm, that the people, inſtead of proceeding in a regular and legal manner, to carry on the buſineſs of the election, the ſole object of their aſſembling, would give way to their boiſterous paſſions, in committing outrages againſt each other. But overlooking, at preſent, the improbability of the aſſertion, let us only attend to the application of the argument; and, in the entry, we muſt obſerve, that, if every meeting or aſſembly, is prohibited, where probably the paſſions of the people may be agitated with violence, and every action reſtrained which may eventually prove fatal to individuals, the conſequences will be more intolerable in ſociety, than the friends of patronage ſeem ever to have been aware of; for it is ſeldom that they are either comprehenſive in their views, or conſiſtent in their reaſoning.

LET us endeavour to trace the conſequences of their preſent argument; and judging from the purity of their taſte, and the delicacy of their ſentiments, we preſume they will bluſh to adhere to it to an end, even callous as they are to almoſt every thing which ſeems to favour the eccleſiaſtical liberty of the people.

AT fairs and markets, in every part of the kingdom, outrages of ſerious and fatal conſequence are, ſometimes, committed: ſhall we, therefore, give a deep

deep wound to the intereſts of internal commerce, by aboliſhing the means by which it is carried on? Funerals in the country have, frequently, been attended with exceſſes of different kinds; muſt, therefore, the people be prohibited from aſſembling, in order to bury the dead? At marriages, it has, ſometimes, happened, that diſputes, concerning the friends and families of the parties, have excited very bitter animoſities, and produced very dangerous quarrels; muſt, therefore, the people be reſtrained from meeting together in order to celebrate the moſt delightful event, which can occur in the life of an individual?

THE paſſion of love has excited the moſt violent animoſities among rivals, and has given occaſion, in different countries, to many untimely deaths, by poiſon and aſſaſſination. Muſt it, therefore, be declared, by ſtatute, that it is criminal, in any perſon to give way to the impreſſions of that amiable paſſion, in the gratification of which, the ſexes have hitherto delighted, and which they have conſidered as one of the greateſt ſources of their happineſs? The effects of wine are apt to inflame the paſſions, and to lead to acts of violence; which experience has, often, demonſtrated. Shall, therefore, every ſocial company be forbidden, and the chearful enjoyments of the cup, entirely, baniſhed from ſociety? It has been found, that a ſtroke of the

the fiſt, has, ſometimes, proved fatal to the lives of individuals; ſhall, therefore, the people be deprived of the uſe of their hands? In this manner, ſhall every natural right be extinguiſhed, becauſe there is, ſcarcely, any one, the exerciſe of which, may not be attended with fatal accidents and inconveniencies?

WE are not to blame, that, by tracing, in a minute manner, the conſequences of an argument adopted by the friends of patronage, we have arrived at a concluſion which proves, with irreſiſtible conviction, not only the futility of that argument, but that it likewiſe involves principles which are, evidently, incompatible with the very exiſtence of civil ſociety. If the friends of patronage are aſhamed of the conſequences of their doctrine, let them abandon their ſyſtem, and betake themſelves to more liberal principles of conduct. But we have not yet exhibited, and perhaps we are incapable of exhibiting a complete view of all the extravagant conſequences of their reaſoning, and their principles.

To prevent fatal and dangerous conſequences, in the different circumſtances which have been mentioned, puniſhment, or reparation is the only remedy which the wiſdom of the legiſlature has ever applied. If an act of violence be committed, in any of theſe circumſtances, an appeal is competent to

the impartial juſtice of the laws, by which puniſhment, or reparation will be decreed againſt the guilty. But, under colour of preventing the exceſſes of human paſſions, to pronounce a general and indiſcriminate extinction or deprivation of the moſt eſſential and indiſpenſable natural rights, is an idea which is, utterly, inconſiſtent with every principle of a free government, and which, the fury of the moſt abſolute tyranny could alone have dictated.

IT has never yet entered the conception of any legiſlature, to treat all mankind as a ſet of criminals, and under pretence of preventing murder, and other heinous offences, to load men with chains and manacles, leſt by juſtling each other in the ſtreets, their paſſions might be inflamed, and they might be betrayed into acts of violence. Remedies againſt the irregular effects of paſſion, which are incompatible with the exerciſe of natural rights and liberties, have been ſparingly adopted by legiſlatures, who reſpected the dignity and happineſs of mankind; and, while juſt and liberal principles of legiſlation have, in our own country, ſo far prevailed, as to tolerate the exerciſe of many valuable natural rights, in companies, meetings, aſſemblies, and other ſituations, where popular exceſſes and irregularities might, naturally, be expected, it is a ſingularity not eaſily to be accounted for, why thoſe aſſemblies alone ſhould

ſhould not be permitted, where the people ſhould be employed, in exerciſing the natural right of electing the miniſters of the Goſpel!

MANY fatal accidents have proceeded from indulging the favourite and gentlemanly diverſion of fowling; for ſome perſons intending only the death of a bird, have unhappily occaſioned that of their deareſt friend. But, on this account, ſhall gentlemen be prohibited by law from gratifying the natural paſſion for the game, and be denied an opportunity of excelling each other, in thoſe nice and manly accompliſhments, which are the pride of the gentlemen of every country? The firſt characters in the kingdom have, ſometimes, periſhed in the courſe of the hunt; and, in this way, had the ſacred perſon of Majeſty been, lately, expoſed to the moſt imminent danger. Shall, therefore, the manly and noble amuſement of the chace be aboliſhed by law? It is a ſpecies of refinement, or rather a degree of folly in refinement, which is not to be mentioned.

BUT to come ſtill more cloſe to the preſent point. Large cities, often, give riſe to tumults and popular diſturbances, of the moſt extenſive and dangerous nature. Shall we, therefore, demoliſh every large town in the kingdom, and declare by law, under

the ſevereſt ſanctions, that no cities ſhall henceforth be built? Upon this principle, the city of London ſhould be razed to the ground; for there, the rabble being miſled, a popular commotion lately happened, which, was attended with more violence and deſtruction, in the ſpace of a few hours, than could, in the natural courſe of things, have reſulted from the popular elections, even though tumultuous, of Scottiſh clergymen, during a period of ſome hundred years. If London had not been ſo immenſely large a town, it is impoſſible, from the nature of the thing, that ſo dreadful and daring an outrage could have been committed, ſince otherwiſe, a multitude ſufficiently numerous for the purpoſe, could not have been collected, nor would there have been a ready ſcene for ſo extenſive a deſtruction of private property. It is, therefore, plain, that London, and every other great town, ought to be immediately demoliſhed; ſo, that no popular tumults, or commotions, may henceforth ariſe, to diſturb the tranquillity of the ſtate, or deſtroy the private properties of men. In a word, there is no end of enumerating the abſurd and extravagant conſequences of that doctrine, which, under the pretence of preventing the effects of popular diſturbances and animoſities, would deprive the people of the natural and fundamental right of paſtoral election.

HITHERTO

HITHERTO have we treated this point of the argument, as if it were really the nature of popular elections of miniſters, to produce ſome of the effects of popular tumults and diſturbances; and, even upon that ſuppoſition, we have, we apprehend, exhibited views, and ſtated circumſtances, which ſhould go far to convince any man, who is capable of extending his ideas of public utility, and public happineſs, beyond the tranſactions of a day, that the argument, deduced from the conſideration of popular tumults and animoſities, is altogether inconcluſive, and merits not any degree of ſerious attention. But, in treating the argument in this light, we have made a conceſſion, which was not ſufficiently warranted, either by experience, or by the nature of the thing. Before concluding, therefore, we muſt take the liberty to inquire, how far it is probable, that popular tumults, or diſturbances of any kind, or of any importance, would be the conſequence of a popular election of the clergy of the church of Scotland.

IF a man of a good underſtanding, a benevolent temper, and little acquaintance with the world, converſing upon this ſubject, were to be told, in poſitive and deciſive terms, that a number of near neighbours, acquaintances, and relations could not poſſibly meet together, in order to elect a miniſter

of the Goſpel, without committing acts of the moſt dangerous violence and outrage againſt each other; he would certainly feel himſelf greatly hurt and ſurpriſed. It would mortify him, to hear ſuch a deſcription of the manners of a civilized people, eſpecially of an aſſembly of men, met together, in order to elect a miniſter of the Goſpel. He would, naturally, inquire, whether, during the time of an election, the operation of the civil laws of the country, and the principles of religion, morality, and humanity, were altogether ſuſpended. He would aſk whether, during that period, the people poſſeſſed any ſenſe of duty, any fear of puniſhment, any quality but fierceneſs, any paſſions but rage and malevolence, when evils ſo horrible and deſtructive were to be the infallible conſequences of their meeting? If, in anſwer to theſe inquiries, he ſhould be informed, that at every election of a clergyman, the people are under the ſame obligations of law, religion, morality, and humanity, which they feel at church, and every where elſe; that upon an election day, the people poſſeſs the ſame ſenſe of duty, fear of puniſhment, reſpect of character, ſentiments of juſtice, and ideas of right, and propriety of action, by which their conduct in common life is regulated; ſtruck with ſo great and apparent a contradiction, he would feel himſelf at

a loſs

a loſs what judgment he ſhould pronounce. To deliver a clear and deciſive opinion, in direct oppoſition to the poſitive aſſertions of men whom he reſpected, would not be altogether agreeable to his delicacy; nor could he ſuffer his underſtanding to be inſulted, by giving way to an inconſiſtent tale, to which no man can give credit, who does not reſolve to liſten, attentively, and aſſent, implicitly, without ſcruple or examination, to every thing that may be told by the zealous ſupporters of ſyſtems, which, under the names of peace and tranquillity, are only calculated, to introduce and render permanent, the moſt pernicious and degrading violations of natural rights.

IN forming an opinion on this ſubject, it ſeems neceſſary that we ſhould attend to the nature of the buſineſs to be tranſacted upon a day of election, and the ſituation of the electors, both with regard to the candidates, and each other, in order to diſcover, whether thoſe horrible conſequences, with which we are alarmed by the friends of patronage, may naturally be expected.

THE buſineſs to be tranſacted, is the election of thoſe ſacred characters who are to diſpenſe the ordinances, and celebrate the rites of religion, in the church of God. Tumult and outrage, therefore, are certainly

certainly not the natural conſequences to be expected from an aſſembly of this kind. The nature of the buſineſs for which they are convened, ſhould rather inſpire ſentiments of peace, piety, friendſhip, reſpect, benevolence, and morality. With regard to the ſituation of the people, in relation to the candidates, and each other, it muſt be obſerved, that the candidates will, for the moſt part, be unknown to the electors, until the vacancy happens; and, as their intereſts never, in any reſpect, interfered, it is not probable, that the people will poſſeſs any malevolence or private reſentment, againſt any of the candidates. The people again, among themſelves, will be actuated, let it be ſuppoſed, with conſiderable warmth, by ſentiments of eſteem, and friendſhip for the different candidates, whoſe intereſts they eſpouſe. Theſe are amiable and generous paſſions, and if, from the natural effects of human infirmities, they ſhould, in ſome inſtances, be carried to exceſs, it cannot juſtly be inferred, that any dangerous conſequences to the electors, to the neighbourhood, or the ſtate, are to be apprehended from them. This reaſoning is ſupported by ſome facts, with an enumeration of which, we ſhall conclude the preſent inquiry.

1. In England, the right of electing members of parliament is widely diffuſed among the people, ſo that the electors, both in boroughs and counties, are

are exceedingly numerous. In the borough of Weſtminſter, and in the county of Middleſex, in particular, the number of electors extends to many thouſands; yet, we hear not in theſe places, of any dangerous tumults, or ſeditious commotions, tending to the diſturbance of the ſtate, or the deſtruction of private property.

2. IN ſeveral pariſhes in the eſtabliſhed church of Scotland, the elections of miniſters are popular: but theſe elections have furniſhed no acts of violence and outrage; whereas, in church ſettlements, by patronage and preſentations, we hear almoſt every day of oppoſition, heats, animoſities, and popular diſturbances; though they have not been attended with any fatal or dangerous conſequences. Many inſtances of violent ſettlements by preſentations have been already ſpecified in former parts of this inquiry, which ſhall not be repeated. But there was a caſe under the conſideration of the laſt general aſſembly of the church of Scotland, which merits particular attention. It was the ſettlement of the pariſh of Fenwick. In this pariſh, a preſentation being granted, a univerſal and determined oppoſition to the preſentee aroſe. The general aſſembly, however, adhering to that fatal ſyſtem of church policy, which had been adopted and eagerly purſued for ſeveral preceding years, paid no regard to the

the voice of the people, and ordered the ſettlement to be carried into execution.

THE judgment of the aſſembly, upon this occaſion, was, beſides, marked with a ſingularity. All the members of the preſbytery, contrary to the uſual form, were required to attend at the execution of the ſettlement. The reaſon aſſigned, at the time, for this unuſual ſentence, though it is not expreſſed in the minutes, was, that the ſettlement being exceedingly odious in the pariſh, few miniſters would attend it; and that, of courſe, the odium would fall entirely upon thoſe few, who ſhould be moſt forward in doing their duty; which appeared to be hard and unjuſt. It, therefore, occurred, that to make the odium of ſo diſagreeable a ſettlement to be felt the lighter, it ſhould be *equally divided* among all the members of the preſbytery; and for this purpoſe, they were all required to attend the execution of the ſettlement.

DIVISIONS of common properties are known; and diviſions of the eſtates of bankrupts are very familiar. But a judicial diſtribution of odium or public reproach among men, who had been guilty of no offence, and ſubjected to no cenſure, is a novelty, which was deſtined to mark the ſpirit and temper of one of thoſe aſſemblies, which had found that a call

call and concurrence of the people, in every ſettlement, are inconteſtably eſtabliſhed in the conſtitution of the church of Scotland †; and yet, that the voice of *one heritor*, in oppoſition to that of the *whole pariſh* beſides, is a legal and regular call of the people *, according to that conſtitution! When men are determined to violate the ſpirit, without daring to reject the forms of a conſtitution, no degree of ingenuity is ſufficient to preſerve a conſiſtency of conduct.

IN this procedure, relative to the ſettlement of Fenwick, there is diſcoverable ſomething more than inconteſtable evidence of that uncommon violence, with which the venerable aſſembly is determined to ſupport and carry into execution, the patronage ſyſtem of church policy. One would have thought, that the univerſal and inflexible oppoſition to the preſentation which occurred in this caſe, might have ſtartled the opinion of the moſt reſolute aſſembly, might have convinced the moſt zealous partiſans of the ſyſtem, of its exceſſive ſeverity, and might have inclined them to relax. But the fate of that favourite ſyſtem was ſuppoſed to be at ſtake; and, therefore, in ſpite of all oppoſition, and

† This is declared by a reſolution of the Aſſembly 1782.

* This was found in the ſettlement of the pariſh of Carſphern.

and every principle of moderation, the aſſembly proceeded, ordered the ſettlement to be carried into execution, and required all the members of the preſbytery to be preſent upon the occaſion, in order to ſhare the odium equally amongſt them.

THIS was not merely a violent ſettlement, contrary to the genius of the conſtitution of the church of Scotland. It was alſo a ſingular phænomenon in the hiſtory of eccleſiaſtical juſtice, which, we truſt, will not be drawn into a precedent. Here was a ſupreme eccleſiaſtical court, proceeding with the gravity of wiſdom, and the ſolemnity of juſtice, to pronounce a ſentence, which they were convinced would be attended with infamy, or odium, among the people, where it was to receive execution! To juſtify this mode of procedure, a private conviction of rectitude of conduct is not ſufficient. God forbid, that courts of law, either civil or eccleſiaſtical, ſhould be ſuffered, under pretence of a purity of private intention, to continue a practice of pronouncing deciſions which, in the general ſenſe and underſtanding of the people, ſhould be attended with odium or infamy; for this is, almoſt, the laſt degree of miſery which can be inflicted, by the ſeverity of legal oppreſſion. Allowing, for the ſake of argument, what cannot be admitted in reality, that the aſſembly were, legally, right in the principle of

of their deciſion, we might appeal to the wiſdom and liberality of thoſe who are beſt acquainted with the ſpirit and principles of legiſlation, whether it is not high time to alter that ſyſtem, which has become odious or infamous in the opinion of the great body of the people.

3. THE number of perſons, who have ſeceded from the eſtabliſhed church, in different parts of the kingdom, amounts to about two hundred thouſand people. * The election of miniſters among them is entirely popular; and, if their elections have been attended with dangerous tumults and acts of violence, they have been very carefully concealed, for they remain yet a ſecret to the world.

4. IN Scotland, at different times, and in different parts of the kingdom, there have been many póll elections in boroughs, where the electors have been exceedingly numerous, but where no tumult aroſe, no fatal accident happened, no act of violence or

* We are informed, that in Scotland, there are three hundred miniſters of the ſeceding intereſt, beſides thoſe of the preſbytery of relief. Some of the congregations of the ſeceding intereſt, ſuch as thoſe of Stirling and Dunfermline, conſiſt of about 3000 people; but, allowing each of 300 miniſters, to have a congregation of 600 perſons only, the number of diſſenters, beſides thoſe of the preſbytery of relief, will amount to one hundred and eighty thouſand; and the preſbytery of relief is moderately rated at twenty thouſand perſons.

outrage of any kind was committed. The poll election, which took place at Edinburgh in 1746, merits, in many reſpects, particular attention. Different liſts of candidates were diſtributed. The diſtinction of Whig and Tory appears to have prevailed, for one of the liſts, we obſerve, is called a Whig liſt. On the firſt day, ſix hundred perſons polled; and the election was conducted and concluded without the ſmalleſt diſturbance, or act of violence.

In ſpeaking of the elections of the people, it would be an act of injuſtice, not to mention the name and character of the chief magiſtrate, choſen by the people of Edinburgh, upon occaſion of the poll election here ſpecified. GEORGE DRUMMOND, who from his youth, had been diſtinguiſhed by his abilities, his private virtues, his application to buſineſs, and love of the public: GEORGE DRUMMOND, every ſtep of whoſe conduct, had been marked by an ardent and inflexible attachment to the liberties and conſtitution of his country: GEORGE DRUMMOND, who has been the author of public works, which conſtitute ſplendid monuments of the moſt benevolent diſpoſition, and the moſt exalted mind: This was the illuſtrious character who, in an election of the people, obtained the higheſt honour, which it was in the power of the people to beſtow!

MVSEVM BRITANNICVM

I N I S.